
Mushoku Tensei

- Volume 16 -

Chapter 155 - Diary - First Half

Part 1

The day after the man claiming to be the future me appeared.

Sleepily, I consider things. First, what is it that I should do? The future me had said it.

『Consult with Nanahoshi』

『Send a letter to Eris』

『Doubt Hitogami, but do not be hostile to him』

I wrote a letter addressed to Eris.

Just for now, the contents say that I'm fine accepting her. However, I'll talk to Sylphy and Roxy before sending it. Depending on how the discussion goes, the contents may change greatly.

Doubt Hitogami, but do not be hostile to him.

I'll declare this the next time he appears in my dream. I don't know when that'll be though.

Consult with Nanahoshi.

Though I want to consult with her, I wonder if she'll believe such a ridiculous talk. No, she's a Slider. Even if it's ridiculous, she should at least have the inclination to believe me.

But before that is———the diary.

I've decided to read the diary. I didn't know what to do since it was left here. This is the life left by that old person after all.

The diary that the Future Me had brought was old and the earlier pages were dull and tattered. But I read it. Whilst skipping over parts that aren't important, I'll learn about the important parts.

■

I was thinking that I'd start a diary from today.
Still, a lot has happened these last few days.
What happened with Perugius, what happened with Zenith.
Teleport magic with summoning magic.
There are a lot of things that I have to do, so I thought to write a diary so I didn't forget.

■

In the morning, Aisha was down and said [A weird mouse died.]
I wonder if she hates mice.

■

It seems that a cat infected with the Magic Stone Disease has been spotted in the neighbourhood.
How scary.
I'd better tell everyone in the family to wash their hands properly.

■

Surprisingly, it seems that Elinalise is pregnant.
Though Cliff seemed uneasy, Elinalise looked happy.
I should get everyone together and bless them.
Times like these call for a loud celebration.

Up until now, it's all been normal diary stuff.
Like how they were taught summoning magic from Perugius.
Like how they went around the flying castle sightseeing with Zanoba.
Like how he found out Roxy's weakpoints in bed.
Like how Lucy looked like an angel when she slept, and would definitely become a beauty in the future.
And each day seemed really fun.
Though it had been dated at the beginning, that stopped somewhere along the way. I wonder if it's because it was annoying. Because of that, I don't know how much time passed, but I recall the old person's words, so it's probably within the span of 2 weeks.
However, after this point, it changes.

■
Roxy collapsed.
Around this time we thought that it was because she was feeling a bit bad, but she eventually gained a fever.
I'd better contact the school and tell them she's resting for a while.
We try using advanced rank detoxification, but it has no effect.
Could it be another incurable disease?
I'd better meet with Cliff soon.

■
Roxy's feet began turning into a purple crystal.
I immediately called for Cliff, and he used his Eye of Identification.
The name of the disease was 『Magic Stone Disease』 .
It can't be healed without God Ranked Detoxification: an incurable illness.

■
To get our hands on God Class Detoxification chants, we headed to the Holy Kingdom of Milis using the teleport magic circles.
The group members were Cliff, Zanoba and I.
Sylphy had wanted to go as well, but I asked her to look after the house.

■
We arrived in Milishion.
It seems that the God Class chant was left inside the cathedral.
Though Cliff knew the location, it was somewhere that you couldn't enter unless you were archbishop level or something.
As a result, we decided to sneak in, deep in the night.
We'll just transcribe it, and then return.

■
We managed to enter.
However, the God Class Detoxification was a book as thick as a dictionary.
There was no way we could transcribe it there.
We took it with us, but during our escape, we were detected.
Right now, we're running from pursuers.

■
We were ambushed at the teleport magic circle.
During battle, the teleport magic circle was destroyed, and became unusable.
Cliff fell due to poison, and is seriously ill and unconscious.
.....I killed my first person.
I can still feel it on my hands.

It's disgusting.
Shit.

■

We move to another magic circle.
Cliff's consciousness isn't returning.
Our faces are being spread throughout the Holy Kingdom of Milis, and are now wanted.
It seems we've completely become the enemies of the Milis Church.

■

Cliff died.
I don't feel like writing for a while.

■

We somehow arrived at another teleport magic circle.
There's just a little more.

■

We were too late.
I don't want to write anymore today.

■

I think I should write about yesterday.
When we entered town, we met Eris and Ghyslaine. Eris screamed something, but I already had two wives,
so I told her that I couldn't be with her anymore and she left with a shocked expression.
In the end, Ghyslaine sent me an unpleasant look of scorn.
When I reached home, everyone had mournful expressions. [1]
Half of Roxy's body had crystallized, and she died.
The chant was useless.
After that, I told Elinalise about Cliff's death.
I was hit across the cheek by Elinalise, and she left for somewhere, crying.
I feel like shit.

■

We had Roxy's funeral.
I didn't feel like doing anything.
All that came were tears.
I don't care about anything.

■

It seems that Elinalise disappeared from town.

Though she's heavily pregnant, I wonder where she went.
Well, whatever.

■

Sylphy tried to cheer me up, but I don't feel better.

Roxy isn't here anymore.

That Roxy.

Roxy who gave her best at everything.

Roxy who brought me outside, and who gently comforted me when Paul died.

Roxy who had become my guide in life. That Roxy.

(The pages were crumpled from tears.)

■

Lately it feels like I've been doing nothing but drinking.

When I don't drink, I remember Roxy and start crying.

Sylphy said that this was no good, but what would she know?

Even though Roxy had taught me very important things.

■

When I drank inside the house, Lilia would scold me.

I started drinking outside the house.

When I drink in the bar, I occasionally bump into Eris.

She says whatever she wants, and then hits me.

What's with that woman?

Ghyslaine doesn't stop her either.

Also, lately Norn hasn't spoken to me. She sends me looks of disdain.

Nobody understands how I feel.

■

Lately, Sylphy has been openly trying to seduce me.

She says stuff about forgetting about Roxy and sleeping with her.

Because she was way too persistent, I shouted at her.

There's no way I'd sleep with her after being told something thoughtless like that.

But that's not all.

If I slept with Sylphy now, I'd probably treat her with drunken violence.

She'd take Roxy's place, then after that I'd let out my anger on her.

That's... no good.

■

I've messed up.

While I was drinking in the bar, a prostitute called out to me.

I was drunk as well, so I went with her to an inn and slept with her.

As expected, women in this trade really are skilled.

It's a bit like, though I thought I've been sleeping with women until now, they were actually just girls, or something...

No, that doesn't matter.

The problem was that I made Sylphy cry.

She saw me coming home, smelling like a woman, and saying "Why aren't I good enough..." and ran to her room crying.

I was lectured by Lilia, and even Aisha bluntly frowned at me.

I can hear crying behind the door even now.

She won't reply when I knock.

I've failed.

I might've been better treating her violently. She might've wanted me to vent out my sadness.

I'll apologize tomorrow.

■

Sylphy won't speak to me.

What should I do?

At these times, if Elinalise were here...

■

Sylphy has disappeared.

When I woke up, the room was empty.

Strictly speaking, only my clothes and belongings were left.

Lilia ordered me to immediately chase after her.

But I wonder if I'm qualified to do so.

Wouldn't it be natural to divorce a man like me?

■

When I grumbled, Zenith slapped me.

Though she didn't say anything, she slapped me again and again.

It's almost like she was criticising me.

■

I decided to chase after Sylphy.

When I gathered information, I found that Sylphy and Ariel had gone back to the Kingdom of Asura.

Though there should've been a few months left before graduation, I wonder why they left so quickly.

Though I don't know why they did this, something might have happened back in Asura.

I decided to hurry as well.

■

I met with Eris again.

She said some incomprehensible stuff about forgiving me now or something or other.

I didn't want to hear it so she suddenly hit me.

Because she was getting way too annoying, I sent her flying with magic, and she drew her sword and attacked me, so I ran.

Eris.....Even though you abandoned me, why now

■

I was stopped because of the snow.

I wonder if Sylphy has already left the snowy region.

I'm getting really impatient.

■

I finally reached the Kingdom of Asura.

But, I was stopped at the border by something troublesome.

It seems that because I was wanted in Milis, I was treated as a criminal in Asura as well.

They tried to restrain me, and I escaped in a panic.

I'll have to find smugglers somehow.

■

I managed to find a smugglers guild.

It seems that these kinds of organisations exist anywhere you go.

It seems like I was the talk of the guild, and they looked at me with envy.

As the thief that stole God Ranked chants from the Holy Kingdom of Milis, I was a celebrity.

When I explained the situation to them, it was decided that I'd be guided by a voluptuous female thief named Triss.

I'm worried that if Sylphy sees me with this woman, she'll get the wrong idea.

■

I entered the Kingdom of Asura.

I put on a hood and mask to hide my face.

From now on my name was Rude Ronumar, and came up with a lie about how my face was cursed, and people who saw it would be turned to stone.

It was decided that Ronumar was a magician working away from his home in Basherant, and was being shown around by his cousin Triss.

Because they thought about various things for me, I bowed.

■

I got hold of information about the King's death.

There was also a rumor about fighting between the princes for his position.

That's probably why Ariel returned here quickly.

■

We'll reach the capital soon.

However, I've heard nothing but suspicious things about Ariel.

It seems that she had assembled troops and staged a coup d'état or something.

It seems that people don't think that she has what it takes to win.

Well, Ariel probably isn't that stupid.

It's just a rumor.

■

We reached the capital.

When I left the role of gathering information to Triss and entered the bar, I spotted Eris.

Could she have followed me all the way here?

No, that's not it.

She was born in the Kingdom of Asura.

In the first place, our destination was probably the same.

■

It seems that Ariel's hidden herself.

Of course, Luke and Sylphy too.

Will I be able to find them?

■

I can't find them.

Triss thinks that they've already left the capital and moved to another town.

Places that Ariel seems like she'd go to... Luke's family's house, perhaps?

Tomorrow, I'll propose to Triss about going to the Notus family's territory.

■

We came to the Milbotts region, governed by Philemon Notus Greyrat.

At the same time, we managed to get hold of information that said that Ariel was hiding in the Notus home.

But how can I meet with Sylphy?

Should I break in?

■

When I entered the Notus home, for some reason Eris was there and I was beat up.

I was caught, thrown into a dungeon, there a person whose face resembled Paul, called themselves Philemon and verbally abused me.

It seems that for some reason, he thinks that I'm here to usurp the Notus house.

After saying that he'd execute me tomorrow and hand my head over to the Milis Church, he left.

After that, I escaped but... Ariel wasn't in Philemon's territory.

■

A coup d'état broke out in the capital.

『Ariel is in the Milbotts region』 was a false rumour.

It seems that Ariel was hiding in the capital, and waiting for her chance.
Will I make it?

■

At a place a day's travel from the capital, I heard that the coup d'état had been suppressed.

First of all it was too reckless, second of all, just as Ariel was thinking of killing the second prince,

she was stopped by the Water God and North Emperor and her forces were annihilated.

It seems that Ariel was caught, and the next day she was executed.

Her forces were annihilated.

Annihilated.....

And Sylphy..... ?

■

.....I'm tired of it all.

Why did this have to happen.....?

■

I'd better write yesterday's events.

In a corner of the capital, at the place of executions, the bodies of Ariel's followers were displayed.

Among them were Luke... and Sylphy.

Sylphy's body was missing its arm, and it had a large cut down its face.

A number of people were throwing stones at them.

As one of the criminals who disturbed the peace of the capital, Sylphy had stones thrown at her.

Each time a stone was thrown, the crows would fly off.

I couldn't bear it any longer and burnt Sylphy and the rest.

I burnt everyone that got in my way as well.

This country should just disappear.

Part 2

I closed the diary with a bang.

It's painful to read. I don't want to read it anymore. Did I really have no choice but to read this? Why did I read such a thing?

"Ueh..."

I feel sick. I'm sure this is just a story that the old man came up with in his delusions. I don't want to think that this kind of future is possible.

"..."

But I have to read it. Knowledge will surely be power.

So I look at the diary... But I don't have the courage to open it. I feel sick. I wonder what other suffering is written in that diary. When I think about it, I start to feel nauseous.

"I'll take a little break..."

I got out of my chair and headed to the toilet.

I threw up. Tears came out. It might be because it was my own handwriting, but I was able to imagine what I was feeling at the time.

The sadness when Roxy died.

The anxiety and hopelessness when Sylphy left.

The feelings when he chased after them.

Then the feeling of loss when he saw the dead Sylphy.

"Oeee..."

With my face buried in the toilet, I just threw up. My stomach is completely empty, but I have no appetite. I'll probably be fine eating nothing today.

When I was rinsing out my mouth with water magic, I found that Sylphy was standing there worriedly.

"R-, Rudi. What's wrong? Are you okay?"

With white hair down to her shoulders, she was wearing casual wear, and felt a little unguarded.

With a wound down her face, missing an arm, killed, cold, and exposed to the public... Such a scene came to mind.

"Wah-, what?"

I embraced Sylphy without a word. Sylphy's body was soft, and warm.

"Rudi, were you that influenced by the fight with Atofe?"

"...Mn"

"Guess it can't be helped, huh... There, there. Whenever it gets tough, I'll be there to comfort you, okay? I know that you're not that strong after all, Rudi."

Whilst tiptoeing a little, Sylphy pat me on the back.

[Whenever it gets tough, I'll be there to comfort you, okay?]

The Future Me ignored these words.

"Mn. Sorry, Sylphy."

"It's fine."

"In the future when things get tough, I might not depend on you, or do or say bad things."

"Ehh..."

"But please don't leave me."

"Umm... If that happens, I might get a little irritated at you, treat you coldly, and fight with you... But we can make up, right?"

"Yeah. Of course we can. Mn, we can make up..."

Sylphy really is gentle. I'll betray this gentle girl.

"Um, Rudi. The way your hands are touching my butt is kind of perverted."

"...Do you not want me to touch you?"

"Well I don't lose anything, so it's fine but... Wah-"

Since I got permission, I picked Sylphy up. I headed to the bedroom. I'm not particularly thinking of doing anything perverted. I was just thinking of flirting together with her like this.

How do I say this? Is it a bit like regaining something I've lost? I don't really get it. Because of reading that diary, I've become sentimental.

While thinking such things, I heal myself with Sylphy.

Part 3

After Roxy came home, I started following her everywhere. I was sitting next to her on the sofa, and playing with the ends of her braids.

Enough that I was asked,

"What's the matter?"

"Umm, Roxy. Won't we talk a little?"

"Don't we always talk...? Or is there something in particular that you'd like to talk about?"

"No, like, in a more flirty way."

"Hahh... Well, it's fine with me, but doing 'that' today is no good, you know?"

"Right. I'm just clinging to you a little, but is that no good?"

"It's fine."

Roxy sat on my lap and dropped her head onto my shoulder. While embracing her shoulders, I meet her eyes up close. Though I said that, it's not like I had something to talk about.

"Umm, how was your day?"

"Nothing happened at all. It was just as usual... All that really happened was that the Principal's wig flew off due to the prank of some students, I guess."

"Ahh, I kind of wanted to see that."

"After that———"

Roxy worked the whole day and was tired. Even so, she concerned herself with me. While we were giggling with idle chat, I somehow ended up giving her butt a feel, and was instantly slapped away. Even so, because I kept insisting on it, Roxy said [I guess it can't be helped] and permitted it.

After that, we entered the bathroom together and I cleaned her back and massaged her shoulders. I was almost like a child showing piety to his parents.

"You're a bit 'that' today, Rudi. Did something tough happen?"

"No, no. Nothing at all. I was just thinking [I'm really so happy that Roxy is alive] again."

"I see... Well, I really did think I was going to die in the Teleport Labyrinth after all. Feel free to confirm it as much as you'd like."

Said Roxy, sitting on my lap in the bath. Whilst massaging her slim shoulders, I asked,

"Roxy. Lately, have there been any weird changes to your body?"

I've avoided the Magic Stone Disease... or so I think, but just because I've taken care of that rat, doesn't mean that things are guaranteed to be okay. There's a chance that the investigation by the Future Me was wrong, after all.

"Ehh? I'm fine, you know. Why did you ask something like that?"

"Well, I was just thinking [It'd be really great if Roxy lived a long life] you see."

"If you think about the lifespans of races, I'll live longer than you after all. I should be the one asking you to live longer, Rudi."

"Of course."

Saying this, I gently smiled at Roxy. For now, things seem okay.

Sylphy and Roxy.

The two of them are alive.

Things won't become like in that diary.

I'll definitely avoid it.

With this in mind, I've gained the strength to read that diary again.

I'm ready.

Chapter 156 - Diary - Second Half

Part 1

The next day.

I've decided to read the rest of the diary.

Though I say this, it seems that after Sylphy's death, he didn't write anything for a while. The paper quality's different to the place that I read up to yesterday. Did he not write anything for a year? Two years? Or perhaps even longer. Five years or ten years? I don't really know what happened during that period.

But I do know that the contents of the diary have become more frivolous. For example how the breasts of a nee-chan^[2] he saw in town were, or how her butt was. About how he went around the red light district, and which brothel was best. It's almost like the diary of a delinquent.^[3] He's written some pretty sleazy stuff.

One day he wrote a ranking of all the women he's slept with so far. Is this really me? If I lose Sylphy and Roxy, will I become like this?

At any rate, I think he lived for a few years with this kind of lifestyle, where he just picked up women. Though it isn't clearly written where he is, since the names of a few shops are familiar, he was probably still in the Magic City Sharia.

Aisha, Norn, Lilia, Zenith and Lucy. Their names come out strangely little. Occasionally Zanoba or Julie's names will appear, and that's about it. Of all things, one day he had his eye on Julie. He had included Julie amongst those he could vent his lust on. Julie who had done her very best to follow Zanoba and my teachings. I don't want to think of this as me. No, I guess it's possible that it's me. Were it a situation where I had given into despair and my lower body, and I had my fame, my body, and my money, then...

There was also Eris. Around this time, he was running from place to place to escape Eris. It seems that Eris was also living in Sharia, and each time they met she'd look unhappy and start bashing him.

『I wanted to catch her one day and mess her up, but I'm scared of her revenge so she's a no go.』 was written.

Worthless. But I can also tell that he has complicated feelings towards Eris. I wonder if he felt a little bit like he wanted to start things over with her. I

wonder if it's because of Sylphy and Roxy that he wasn't able to love her, so things became like this. I feel like there's a bit of a contradiction in the things that he wrote he did.

There were a few disquieting things written here. It seems that the Milis Church had placed a bounty on his and Zanoba's heads, and bounty hunters and assassins were popping up quickly. It seems that they weren't a big deal and all had the tables turned on them...

But as I was thinking, when I turned to the next page, the contents changed again.

It seems another year passed by. He didn't write what happened. I should also mention that the quality of each page was considerably different, and the dates that he wrote entries were indeterminate.

■

Norn's Ruijerd books and figures are doing well.

Also, in collaboration with the Magic University, I started officially teaching chantless magic classes.

The Holy Kingdom of Milis is demanding via the Kingdom of Asura that the Kingdom of Ranoa hand me over, but as long as I am of use to the Magic Triumvirate, they probably won't do so.

As long as the Central Continent is separated by the Red Dragon Mountains, the attackers in a war would be at an overwhelming disadvantage, after all.

It seems that the Kingdom of Asura still doesn't know that I was the culprit behind the fire murder incident. They're a stupid lot. They're probably filled with idiots.

■

Zanoba is close to completing his automaton research.

It took longer than expected.

However, I don't have the excitement that I did back in the day.

Just why have I been working on this?

■

The automaton was a success.

It's an automaton built in the spitting image of Sylphy.

She has her own will, and acts independently.

At the same time, she'll always listen to what I say.

She's gentle, and obedient, and gets a little jealous, so it's like seeing the

old Sylphy.

But, this isn't it.

This really isn't it...

■

I destroyed the automaton.

I thought that Zanoba would be angry, but on the contrary he apologized to me.

The one who should be sorry is me.

I can't be thankful enough to Zanoba.

I'll make sure not to betray him at least.

■

We created a doll that was different from Sylphy and Roxy.

This one was named Fourtee by Zanoba.

When I asked why that name, Zanoba replied with his chest held up in pride that it was because it was the fourteenth masterpiece.

■

We mass produced Fourtee's sister machines and ended up deciding to sell them to the Magic Triumvirate.

Having the country as your regular customer sure is good.

Though I don't know how much use they'll be militarily, they're what Zanoba's and my skills have to offer.

They should be stronger than the common knight or adventurer.

Still, I've no goal now, huh.

What should I research next?

Though I don't really know why, it feels like I've been motivated for the first time in a long time.

It seems that Zanoba's research ended up in success. However, the theory behind the technology isn't written here. I guess there's no real reason to compile a research report. If that sort of stuff were written, I think our research would take a huge leap, but...

Well, I guess we don't need it anyway. Zanoba's having fun right now, and the process is important too.

While I was thinking this, the next page completely changed. Again, the page was wrinkled with tears.

■

Hitogami appeared in my dreams.
I can still feel his touch on my shoulder.
I loathe him.
I really loathe him.

■

I have to get stronger.
I have to kill Hitogami.
I definitely have to do this.
If I don't kill that fucker, Sylphy, Roxy and Roxy's child won't be able to rest in peace.
And I won't be able to feel better.

■

Speaking of which, I wonder if Lilia and the rest are doing well.
What kind of kid did Lucy grow up to be?
Did she end up as a beauty who looks like Sylphy?
Is she studying properly? Is she eating properly?
...Why didn't I do things better after Sylphy died?
Only Aisha returned and cared about me, but... even if I write it now, is there even any use?
It's regrettable.

■

How can I get stronger?
Should I train my magic?
Should I look for users of King Ranked and Emperor Ranked magic?
No, going by the trend thus far, those above Saint Ranked only increase in scale, and won't really be of use in combat.
The situation is that I have no King Ranked or above magic except the lightning attack, but even so I'm not lacking in offensive capabilities.
The problem is defense and mobility.
I can't wear touki, and my speed and defense fall behind others.
what should I do?

■

A certain book wrote about the Fighting God.
The Fighting God wore a golden armor over his body, which meant that his physical abilities were increased manyfold.

When I spoke about this with Zanoba, he came up with an idea.

Wearing 『Zariff's Prosthetic Hand』 over my whole body.

Thinking about it, though I can't use touki, as long as I fill mana into my prosthetic arm, I can display power greater than normal.

If I make the armor myself, and make it the absolute hardest, then covered my whole body in it...

Alright.

■

I gained Zanoba's cooperation and the full-body armour was a success.

It's a little over 2 metres.

It ended up quite large.

Moreover, the mana consumption is high, and no one can handle it but me.

It's halfway to a huge piece of junk.

Were Cliff alive, we might have been able to create a more efficient armor but...

There's no use in saying that.

At any rate, I've copied a certain game and named it 『Magic Armour』 .^[4]

Part 2

After that, a story about me getting strong began.

With the Magic Armor, that is, a full-bodied Zariff's Prosthetic Hand, I was able to gain power, speed and defense on the level of the 7 Major World Powers. It seems that using it for half a day at full power was his limit, but even at 30% output, he wouldn't lose against common enemies. It really was a successful concept, huh?^[5] Though considering that it's written that the Fighting God wore a similar equipment, this idea has been around for a long, long time though.

...Though I also want a Magic Armor, would we be able to create one with our current level of research? No, it's not about being able or not. We'll do it.

At any rate, for the names of my other family members to show up so very little, I wonder if they left. Let alone Norn, to even use up Lilia's good graces... Just how far did I...?

No, though he didn't write the details, there's the possibility that they were in danger from Milishion assassins. Yeah, that's it.

Well anyway, I'd better start treating my family extra kindly. Yeah. If I remember correctly, Norn is coming home today, right? In that case, I wonder if we should all eat out for once. Well, it's always a good thing to spend time with family.

"Onii-chan, lunch is done! Let's eat together!"

While I was thinking, Aisha's voice came from behind me. When I got out of my chair and opened the door, I found my lively little sister standing there in a maid outfit. She probably just came from tasting the food, because there was a little sauce on her mouth.

"You have sauce on your mouth you know."

I took out a handkerchief and wiped her mouth clean.

"Mmguu, thanks."

Aisha was smiling. Even after the Future Me became a worthless person, it seems she still took care of me. The old man didn't mention Aisha, but if she was the only family he had left, she was surely his emotional support.

"Aisha. Do you have anything you want?"

"Eh? What's this all of a sudden?"

"Since you're always trying your best, I was thinking of rewarding you somehow."

"Ehhh, no wayyy. I'll feel bad about Norn-nee if only I get something. ...But you know, just recently I saw this cute hairclip. Eyes sparkling."

Eyes sparkling isn't something you're supposed to say, damnit.

Just who'd you learn that off?

Well, it was probably me, though.

"Alright. Let's go shopping next time. We'll keep it a secret from Norn, okay?"

"Eh-!?"

Aisha twisted her body into an exaggeratedly shocked pose.^[6]

"Whawhat? Really, what's the matter, Onii-chan? What's your purpose? Hah-! Could it be that you're after my body!? Would it be better if I cleaned my body and headed to your room tonight, Danna-sama? Uhun!"

"Yeah, yeah, let's just eat lunch first. It'll get cold, after all."

"Okaaay."

After having such a conversation, we moved to the dining room.

Though Roxy and Norn weren't here, eating with my family made the food seem really delicious. When I frankly said that today's food tasted better than usual, Lilia smiled just a little.

After lunch, I return to the diary.

The Future Me journeyed the world looking for a way to reach Hitogami. On his journey he met a great number of people, and was shocked at the lack of information. The chance of those who were long-lived having information on Hitogami was high. After realizing this rule, he focused on those who were long-lived. He steadily trained his magic, developed magic, and became stronger a little at a time.

Gravity magic, electricity magic, voice magic... He even managed to increase his healing magic to Saint Ranked. He concluded that magic was versatile, and as long as he had the right feeling for it, he could do anything. He wrote things like how the mouse was the carrier of the Magic Stone Disease, and how Sylphy's death was possibly at the hands of Hitogami.

At a glance he seemed to be doing favorably. But because he couldn't get even a little information, the Future Me started to grow enraged, little by little. In those days, it seems that he wasn't a very good person. Quarrels would arise wherever he went, and after defeating small fry he'd look down on and scorn them. He did whatever he wanted, and he'd even rape women who passed by. Though I thought he'd know better at his age...

I don't want to become like this.

Also, Eris would frequently appear. It seems that on his journey around the world he came into contact with Eris countless times. And because Eris was strong, he tasted defeat countless times.

Though you can't tell from the words, Eris may have been remonstrating me for turning into a piece of trash. But because Eris got in his way, he started misunderstanding her as a pawn of Hitogami or something. He arbitrarily decided that Eris was interfering with him whenever something was inconvenient for Hitogami. [There's no doubt that Eris is being manipulated by Hitogami] he thought.

As I continued reading, I found that he started hating Eris more and more. It was something without any proof that he arbitrarily decided upon. It probably counts as a type of unjustified hatred.^[7]

And it seems that Eris gradually became unable to beat him. Was it because he got stronger, or was it because of age that Eris became weaker? I can't tell from what's written. In the end, 'that' time came.

■

Eris was crying.

How long has it been since I've seen Eris crying?

I might have overdone it.

Could it be that she has nothing to do with Hitogami?

No, but if that's the case then it doesn't explain why she's been wholeheartedly getting in my way the whole time since Sylphy's death.

Moreover, when I questioned her during my journey, she would always keep her mouth shut.

She knows something.

Something.

■

Eris escaped.

There were bite marks on the handcuffs.

Are her teeth made of steel!?

Fuck.

■

I'll have an audience with Atofe tomorrow.

Though I don't think that muscle-brained idiot knows anything, as a long lived immortal demon, the chance that she knows something is high.

Even if I have to beat her half to death, I'll question her.

■

Eris died.
Ghyslaine blamed me.
I don't understand.

■

I'll try and organize what happened yesterday.
I ended up fighting Atofe. Atofe, Atofe's imperial guard, I fought all of them together.
I thought I could do it, but as expected, Moore got in my way.
I was careless and completely messed up. Even though I should've known that the man known as Moore was a terrifying master of magic... It was because I was too focused on Atofe.
When I was in dire straits, Eris leapt in.
She covered for me, and died.
Ghyslaine told me the reason.
She told me about everything from the day we met again, until today.
Eris had just wanted to be by my side.
I had always, always been misunderstanding her.
She had loved me all this time.
It was because of this alone that she'd been following me around.
It's like a joke.

Part 3

The details aren't really written here, but it's probably the same as what the old man told me.

...I guess I really should marry Eris, huh?

How do I say this, I feel that she should be rewarded.

But would Sylphy and Roxy allow it?

Roxy wouldn't oppose it.

But what would Sylphy say?

Sylphy who was jealous of Nanahoshi...

No, at any rate I probably have no choice but to discuss it with them.

Sending the letter comes after that. I'll discuss it with them tonight when Roxy comes home or something.

Let's continue reading.

After this, once again he didn't write anything important for a while. He moved here and there, and met this person and that, and fought with someone or other. All this was written indifferently. Amongst those he fought were brave people like the Water Emperor, or the North Emperor. However, it was like he didn't care in the least about defeating them, and didn't write the details. It was just stuff like,

[I killed _____. He didn't know anything about Hitogami.]

And the years flew by once again.

The next time he wrote anything long was on paper of plainly different quality.

■

Zanoba died.

At some point, I don't know when, The Order of the Temple entered the Kingdom of Ranoa.

When I came running, it was already too late for anything.

The mansion was burnt down, there were black scorch marks in front of the door to Zanoba's cellar, and inside were Ginger, Julie and Aisha who I had left with Zanoba, chopped to pieces.

In the Kingdom of Ranoa, I once again ended up massacring the Order of the Temple.

But by the time I killed them, there was already no point.

Even though Zanoba had always given his best for me.

Why wasn't I there when he was in trouble?

For what reason have I gained all this power?

I'm powerless.

■

In the end, everyone died.

The only one left is me.

There's no one left anymore.

I couldn't protect anyone.

■

It's because of Hitogami.

I have to at least kill Hitogami...

The contents suddenly became heavy. Zanoba and Aisha died too, huh?
...That's harsh.

But still, I wonder if he didn't search for our family? Well, I don't know how he'd be able to face Lucy after all this time though.

...Or could it be that despite not being written in this diary, Lilia and the others died as well?

For Norn not to be mentioned either...

...No, let's stop with this. Let's think of things that weren't written as things that didn't happen.

Still, Zanoba's death really didn't have anything to do with Hitogami but... It seems that he had already badly fallen into tunnel vision by then.

After this, he began searching for Hitogami like a madman. More severely than ever before, he proceeded with a vigor that massacred everyone in his way.

Then, he found it.

■

I'm excited.

I'm in the far reaches of the Begaritto Continent.

In a place that basically no one has stepped before, I found a certain ruin.

It's the ruin of the ancient Dragon Race.

According to the wall art left here...

This world is separated into 6 parts.

The Dragon World.

The Human World.

The Demon World.

The Beast World.

The Ocean World.

The Sky World.

Each of them is like one of six surfaces; in other words, they're connected like a die.

Inside them.

In the interior of the die, is the Void World.

If you want to travel from one world to another, you have no choice but to go through the Void World.

But unless you use a certain method, you can't pass through the Void World.

After this, the wall was broken so I couldn't read it, but at the very end, this was written:

『Hitogami... is the Void World』

I've finally found him.

I think I'll stay here for a while and research what's written here.

■

Written on the wall art is the history of the attempts at reaching the heart of the Void World.

It seems to be derived from magic like summoning magic or teleport magic that uses the Void World as a path.

I guess I really should research in that direction, huh?

■

I've studied the entirety of these ruins.

It seems that the ancient Dragon Race built something for the sake of reaching the heart of the Void World.

But, I don't know what it was.

The part of the wall art that described it was collapsed.

But there's no mistake that it's something related to summoning and transfer magic.

■

When you mention summoning, what comes to mind is Perugia.

That guy is informed on summoning magic.

If I ask him, he might know something.

■

Perugius didn't know a thing.

To start with, that guy didn't even know about Hitogami.

Besides the fact that Laplace would become enraged at the word Hitogami, Perugius didn't know a thing.

With this, I'm back to the starting point.

Though Laplace knew of Hitogami, he doesn't exist in this world anymore... Perhaps Orsted might know something.

■

I never even got close to meeting Orsted.

I guess I really should research teleport magic, huh?

Still, it might be because I've continued to fight over these past few

decades, but the movements of my body are becoming slower.

I might be about to hit my limit.

No, while I can still move, I'll go search for another ancient Dragon Race ruin.

This world is a die, and in the hollow part inside is the Void World.

And Hitogami is literally in the heart of this world.

I see.

That feeling of being sucked underground when I'm being transferred. It's because I'm really being pulled underground and I pass through the Void World. Though I say 'underground', even if I dig into the earth, I probably won't reach the Void World.

Now then, the continuation is a few years later, huh. It's a diary with a lot of omissions.

■

I found a second ancient Dragon Race ruin.

It's deep in the mountains on the Magic Continent.

Just why did the ancient Dragon Race build their ruins in such an out of the way and dangerous place?

This area is filled with nothing but troublesome monsters.

Ah... Come to think of it, is Perugius's flying castle also a ruin?

Well, whatever.

I'll conquer the ruins starting tomorrow.

■

It bore fruit.

I found a complete version of the wall art that I found a few years ago.

This place had the missing parts of the method of reaching the Void World that was collapsed on the other one.

The ancient Dragon Race created 5 treasures. Using these, you can reach the Void World.

...Finally.

Finally, it seems that I'll be able to reach Hitogami.

However, I'm already over 60 years old.
My body is rickety.
Will I make it in time?

■

When I returned to Perugius's place, a certain matter was proven.
It was that the ancient Dragon Race produced 5 treasures.
Each one of the Five Dragon Generals held one, and it seems only the
Dragon God held the secret to the door to the world.

But of the Five Dragon Generals, one has already died.
The treasure he held is missing.
The final member of the Five Dragon Generals is also missing.
According to Perugius, it seems that the final member will appear in a few
decades.

I almost remembered something about the implications of his words, but
in the end couldn't remember.

Lately it's getting harder to remember what I want.
I wonder if Perugius is still hiding something.
I'm irritated.

However, Perugius is the only person I can talk about the good days with.
I don't want to kill him.

Perugius said that if it was Orsted, he might know about the secret, but... I
haven't the slightest clue where he is.

There are still a few decades until the final person appears.
Just that is enough to feel despair about.
I probably can't live that long. This body is already at its limit.
I can feel that I don't have much longer to live.
What should I do...?
I don't have any time left.

■

I can't obtain the treasures of the Five Dragon Generals.
Whether because they're treasures, or because they're secret, it doesn't
seem like I can produce them.

There's too much I don't understand about their principles.

I... can't go to the Void World.

■

I'm tired of this.
Just how long must I struggle by myself?
For who am I even doing this for?
Even my hatred towards Hitogami is wearing out.

I'm tired.
I just feel tired.

Part 4

I could feel that he'd really given up.

There aren't many pages left.

So I'd just read roughly 50 years worth, huh?

Without any results to show for it, he continued to do nothing but struggle, and the result was that he didn't get anywhere.

Even if he weren't me, he'd probably stop thinking about anything at all due to the weariness.

No, if it were the current me, I might have given up at an even earlier stage.

■

I think I'd better write my research notes separately here as well.

Among my transfer magic research was a certain hypothesis:

『Summoning magic』 and the magic recorded on the Dragon Race wall art. If I modify these two, I might be able to travel to the past.

However, on top of it being theoretical, just transferring back in time a few seconds should take a tremendous amount of mana.

If I leap back in the order of years, just how much mana would I need?

■

I've decided to go to the past.

I have my diary with me.

If I use this diary as the origin, I might be able to return to the moment I wrote this diary.

I'll go back to the time when I was tricked by Hitogami, when I let out that rat, and when I killed Roxy.

I don't know if I'll be able to go.

I don't know what'll happen if I transfer to the past.

I'm aware of the concept known as a 'time paradox'.

■

There are a lot of things I'm uneasy about.

Will it be a time slip or a time leap?^[8]

If it's a time slip, what is it that I should tell them?
I should tell them about the Magic Stone Disease, about Eris, and then about Hitogami.
Will I be able to get it across to them?
Will the me in the past believe that I came from the future?
If it's a time leap, how should I face Sylphy and Roxy?
I want to see them once again. I want to meet them again. I want to apologize to them.
But when I think that I'll overwrite the consciousness of the me from when I was happy...
Should I conduct more experiments regarding this point?
Considering that I don't know if I'll cause a time paradox, I feel that it'd be best not to experiment too much.
There's also the possibility that if I go back a few days, only my consciousness travels there and I leave my memory behind.
It's possible that I'd continue to loop meaninglessly, unable to even die, and continue to live in this world...
In that case, at the very least... Sylphy and Roxy one last time...
No, I guess it's fine.
Let's stop thinking about the difficult things.
I don't have anything left anyway.
I couldn't accomplish a thing. I've become a worthless man.
Even if I fail and it becomes the cause for some other incident, I don't care.
I'm already fine with whatever.
But if I manage to succeed, then... I might give Hitogami a hell of a shock.

The diary stops there. He probably leapt to me after that. He probably realized he didn't have enough mana at that point.
I don't understand the theory behind his slight failure to leap to the past using teleport magic. In the first place, based purely on what I've read, wouldn't he have been fine with mana consumption had he just leapt to the past bit by bit? I wonder if it's because he was senile that he didn't realize that.
No, that's probably not it, huh.

The me from that time definitely had confidence in his mana pool. The thought that he didn't have enough might not have even crossed his mind. But somehow or other, I understood just what I needed to; if I don't want to become like this, I must take action.

"I've returned."

The moment I thought that, I heard Roxy's voice from the entrance.

The things that I can do right now...

First, I'll have a discussion with Sylphy and Roxy tonight.

About Eris, as well as what to do from now on.

Chapter 3 - Resolve

Part 1

--- Sylphy's perspective ---

Recently Rudi has been acting strange.

He locks himself all day in the study, and his face looks pale when I thought he was going to come out.

What is he doing? Even though I'm worried, but he won't tell even if I asked. Last night when I try to break the question, he instead takes me to bed.

Well, if taking me helps his distress, then that works too.

When I ask Roxy about this, she said.

"Sylphy has noticed too... Rudi when troubled rarely likes to talk about it... Let's just try to help him when the time comes."

So she's worried too. But if this continues, maybe I should take the initiative and try to force him to explain what's going on.

With that in my mind, after dinner, Rudi pleads with some difficulty.

"Ah, Roxy-san, Sylphy-san, can you come to my room after dinner?"

A strange tone, feels a little like Rudi that time when he had Roxy and I together.

But that's nothing to feel guilty about, he shouldn't feel like he's imposing.

That's the kind of guy Rudi is, even I have no choice but to forgive him.

Roxy doesn't seem to mind, and she takes good care of me, so I don't really mind doing it together either.

Why is Rudi so worried.

Regardless, since he asked, Roxy and I are busy preparing ourselves.

We went in the bath together, and spread on perfume specific for this occasion.

For panty, I picked one I recently bought, and nightgown... the high exposure one. Rudi really likes it soft and with sleeves, so I picked that one.

Also, I left two buttons unbuttoned in the front.

Even though I'm a bit flat chested, so that isn't very sexy.... But even if just a little, I want him to cherish me.

Wait, will he think I'm too naughty... No no, Rudi won't think so. It's fine, it's fine.

A few days ago I caught him peeking when I had two buttons unbuttoned as well.

Even though I caught him, since that seems to delight him, I let him have his fill, and that night he took me too.

Roxy wears her usual one-piece nightgown, but she isn't wearing any panties. That's her method of attack as well...

Regardless, since we're both ready, we head towards the bedroom all fired up.

Rudi sits on a chair in the bedroom, waiting on us. Roxy and I sit down side by side. Me on the right, Roxy on the left. There's no particular reason for this, that just seems to be the way it works.

"..."

Usually, Rudi will with a perverted face squeeze between us. But today, something's different.

He sits solemnly on his chair, his face serious. Like searching for a way to break the ice before Rudi said [Ah!] and faces Roxy.

"Ah-, Roxy."

"Em?"

"How's Norn doing in school?"

Feels like he's reciting someone else's line.

Roxy can only smile wryly.

"... Nothing in particular. Didn't you ask Norn herself a few days ago?"

"I thought it would be better if I get your judgement of it."

Rudi sounds off. I snicker slightly.

"Ah... Makes sense. Her studies and sword practice are so-so, but she's working hard for the Student Council. She's being recognized for her work on Public Morals. Even though there are many cheeky students, but they'll generally give her way when they cross paths. That might have to do with being Rudi's sister. Mostly, since she has many upperclassman admirers, no one gives her any trouble. She seems to have many friends, so I don't think there's anything Rudi should worry about."

"I see. Thank you."

Yeah, Norn is a hard worker. I haven't been to the school much lately, but I have heard some news from other Student Council members. Rarely do you see a kid so diligent.

I don't get to act like an older sister very much...

"Roxy, how about on your side?"

"Huh, what is it?"

"Anything in particular that's bothering you recently? Right, for example, feeling hungry so you sneak out for food or something?"

"Recently Rudi has always been sharing your meal with me. I'm actually worried that I might get fat."

"How about at school?"

"... School has been whatever. Once in a while someone will make fun of me because I'm small, and some students don't pay attention to class."

"What? How dare they? Who are these impudent imbeciles that don't pay attention to Roxy's lessons. I'll teach a lesson so the only thing they'll say from then on is [JesusBABUCHAAHHH]." ^[9]

Roxy bows lightly, a little shocked.

Feeling a little embarrassed, she plays with her hair.

How nice.

Having Rudi respect you so much. It makes me jealous.

"Well, there's one thing I'm worrying about..."

"Go ahead."

"That thing, I want to be sure before I announce it."

"... Then I look forward to it."

Ah, I think, I know what Roxy was going to say. Now that she mentioned it, her body has been acting strange recently.

Maybe I should prepare to congratulate her soon? No, she needs to confirm it still.

"Sylphy."

"What is it, Rudi?"

Suddenly getting asked, I try my hardest to look cute by tilting my head. Rudi's eyes focus slightly below my head, good, operation successful!

"Recently, em... Lucy, how is she?"

"Doesn't Rudi check up on her often? She's doing well?"

"She hasn't suddenly started yelling [I am my own Lord throughout heaven and earth.] ^[10] or anything like that right?"

"Heaven... What? Ah, but Lilia-san said she'll start to crawl very soon."

"Oh."

All thanks to Lilia-san, parenting has been going smootly.

Even though Ariel-sama has said to leave the child care to the maids, and that mothers don't need to be involved. But grandma said to give as much loving care with my own two hands as possible.

So I have been following grandma's advice. Rudi seems to want me to take good care of Lucy, so I will.

"Sylphy, anything in particular that's bothering you recently?"

"No, but if I can be honest, it's that my husband seems to be hiding something."

I finally said it, but I feel like I didn't say it well.

"Oh, ohh, sorry."

Rudi looks visibly shaken, sheepishly averts his eyes.

So he's hiding something.

But would he tell...

Right then, Rudi recovers.

Looking focused.

In these moments, Rudi looks so cool...

"That's actually what I asked you to come for today. That was it."

I sit back straight and stop unbuttoning my gown.

Roxy while puzzled also straightens up.

"Em.. Next, I don't know how I say this but... a few days ago, I met someone."

"Someone?"

"Yes, a miko that can predict the future... someone like that."

What Rudi said next even made us sense the impending crisis.

How a bad person has been eyeing Rudi and the family (us).

How that bad person might cause all sorts of misfortune on the family (us).

How because of that, Rudi might start doing many things that look very strange to us.

Honestly speaking, I'm worried that he's over thinking it, but Rudi seems to have some definite proof. He must have thought about the situation before talking to us, about what he can say, about what he can't.

Even though some of this doesn't make sense, but it'll be too late once something happens. I can understand Rudi's thought process here.

"I see. Then, is there anything we can do to help?"

"Not that there isn't, but for me, I just want you to stay as safe as possible."

That again, recently that's all Rudi says. When did this start... Was it when Paul-san passed away?

I know he's just worrying about us, but isn't he being too protective? I'm not a kid that can't do anything anymore...

"But what if Rudi faces danger while we're not looking?"

"It's too early to tell, but it's possible?"

"I don't want that..."

Rudi was hit hard during the Atofe fight.

Even though Rudi is strong, he doesn't actually enjoy battle.

Even though he still traveled far and wide, fighting, dying...

Even though I don't want to, I can only stay home and wait for Rudi, comfort him, encourage him...

Ugh-.

"I understand."

The person that said this is Roxy. Still twirling her hair, she looks at Rudi in the eye, smiling.

"When Rudi isn't home, I will protect Norn-san and Aisha-san."

Straightforward she answers. Like she wants to confirm her mission to Rudi.

"Roxy won't mind?"

Doesn't Roxy want to follow him? That's what I actually wanted to say. Roxy nods.

"Because Rudi would be more upset if his family fell to misfortune than himself."

"... But."

Speaking of which, Roxy was with Rudi when Paul died. I only heard about how depressed Rudi was by Paul's death. They said Rudi was at the worst he had ever been, so the situation must be really desperate for him.

Desperate enough to break our vows... Ah, I'm a terrible woman, forget it. Rudi came back to me, that's all that matters.

"Sylphy, of course I don't want to just watch on the sidelines if Rudi is in danger."

What does that mean? Roxy will stay home?

"If we feel there's a time we have to lend him a hand, then let's make our own judgement on how to help Rudi, when the time comes."

Ah, so that's what she means. That makes sense if I think about it.

We don't need Rudi's permission to help Rudi. We should do it, as long as Rudi is safe.

"... You're right. Em, I understand."

Rudi can only smile wryly at Roxy's words. Not with rebuke, but looking at her with eyes of trust.

"Rudi, don't look back, please just do what you think is right. We'll protect you from behind."

Roxy said with a smile. Rudi's eyes sparkles. Roxy is amazing, to have Rudi's respect like that.

"Then, when I have it bad, please come to my aid."

With a sigh of relief Rudi finally smiled. No matter what, as long as it helps Rudi calm down, that's what's important.

If Rudi faces danger, I'll decide on my own to help him. Yes, that's right.

Maybe it has always been like this for me, be his support when he's in trouble, and be a good wife when he isn't.

That's fine.

"Then, there's one more thing."

At that moment I was clenching my fist with enthusiasm, when Rudi said in a meek voice.

Somehow the atmosphere is different. The stuff said earlier was difficult, but was with wording. This time it feels like we're back to the topic he has been avoiding.

"... This, is there even a good way to say this?"

"Is it really that bad?"

Roxy carefully prods Rudi. He nods forcefully.

"It's hard for me to tell you two."

" ... "

What is it? Now I'm feeling anxious. Is it about Rudi looking unwell recently?

Don't tell me he has some incurable disease that even Detoxification Magic can't cure?

"I'm not sure yet, but, we might have to add another person."

" ... "

" ... "

Eh, add a person, so a girl? That's what he means?

Even though I told him to not add anymore...

No, I never asked him not to, forget it.

But Rudi doesn't keep his promises! What is he even thinking?

But I won't ask, I am the good wife, a good wife won't object to her husband.

"Who? Nanahoshi?"

I try my best to stay calm, pretending that I'm angry. I think I'm successful.

Speaking of the wench, Nanahoshi. She doesn't feel right to me. She doesn't seem to like Rudi, at most the only thing she feels for. If Rudi pushes the issue, I won't object to her. But just because I won't object doesn't mean I will welcome her... Em--. ^[11]

"She's not Nanahoshi."

Rudi denies it, but Rudi furrows his brow, like he feels particularly apologetic.

"A girl by the name of Eris."

"Eris..."

Eris, who's Eris? I think I heard of her before, but she's not someone from school.

"I remember her. Rudi was her home tutor at Fortress City Roa back then, right?"

Quickly, like coming to my rescue Roxy answers. Now I remember her.

"... She's the one that gave Rudi that illness."

"Yes, ah, something like that."

Has Rudi already forgotten, what happened when we reunited?

It wasn't clear to me back then, but from how much Rudi changed after we got married, I know now how much that illness destroyed his pride as a man.

That pain, was that woman, even though I don't have a solid grasp of her, I know that to be the truth. Even at the start I suffered as well.

"Rudi suffered so much back then, yet, you still like her?"

"The person I like now is Sylphy."

He stares straight into my eyes and said bluntly. How embarrassing.

Ohh, Rudi is so cool, I want to roll around and yell.

If they're still here, I want to go show off to Rinia and Pursena.

No no, right now there's this person called Eris. I can't lie to myself.

"Then, since she left Rudi, will she still have any lingering feelings and want to make up with you?"

"No, leaving is my misunderstanding. Lingering feelings and such, I don't think her heart has changed."

"... But, Rudi suffered so much."

"Yes..."

"I still remember how savage Rudi felt in those days."

"Back then, not only could I not forgive Eris, I was even afraid of meeting her."

"..."

So it's different now? Is this the future-predicting miko's doing?

Maybe he gives those sorts of prophecies. Em, still, something feels wrong.

Well, if someone told me [In the future, you'll marry a boy name Rudeus and have 5 children] I'd look forward to it.

But for these things how the person in question feels is important. Getting married even though Rudi obviously doesn't like her. How does that work?

"If Sylphy objects to marrying her, then let's just stop here. But ultimately I still want to clear the air with her."

Rudi said, but he seems to come to some realization from his own words. What is it?

"But apparently, Eris, for me even till now, has been training at the Holy Land of the Sword. Isn't it pitiful for her if I reject her when she returns?"

"True, it might be as you said."

Always working, but finally get rejected. I can sympathize with that kind of fear, because back in Buina Village, I too was doing the same to chase Rudi.

"I'm not really objecting..."

If the Metastasis Event didn't happen, and Rudi never came back to Buina Village, I might have gone to search for him. If I saw him married with another girl... Then it would hit me hard...

"I have never seen her... but.... well..."

Yes. I have never seen her either. Because of the way she treated Rudi, I always thought she was a terrible person.

But, a misunderstanding, in other words she has always loved Rudi, in other words she never meant to hurt Rudi like that.

After some thought, Roxy finally speaks.

"Why not wait until you finally reunite with Eris-san before deciding on this?"

"Roxy?"

"I got a feeling that even Rudi doesn't really know where you stand on this. Until you meet with her again, there are a lot of things that you won't know."

What is Roxy thinking? A third player has appeared, yet she doesn't show any objection. Yet all I can think about is all my own concerns...

"After meeting Eris, if I can see no way for this to work, then... I might object as well."

Ah, so that's how it is, the same idea as before. Just an agreement. As expected of Roxy. She has thought this through.

It feels like she's a much more reliable wife than I am.

"Of course, this doesn't involve just us alone. We need to talk with the rest of the family as well... But for me, I'll support Rudi's decision."

"Thank you."

"As long as you won't forget about me, even if you add 3, 4 more, I won't mind."

"Forgetting Roxy is impossible."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

Rudi's complete trust, smart...

She makes me so jealous.

No, I have to work to be like her too.

My goal as a mature woman.

"Sylphy, I'm really sorry."

"No, rather, seems like all I do is complain. Sorry."

Rudi and I both lower our heads in apology.

Roxy laughs quietly at this sight.

This feels a little different than with Luke and Ariel.

It's a pleasant space.

But if there's one more.

How will it change...

It makes me anxious.

Will she steal Rudi?

--- Rudeus's perspective ---

Afterwards, the three of us sleep in a row. Even I'm in no mood for fun after those heavy words.

... Still, in my head I can't help but remember Eris's face, no matter how hard I try.

Even though I have long put her behind me, but from the depths of my guts I feel something rising.

Just like Roxy said, I don't even know what I really think about her.
No matter what, I need to settle the score with Eris.

But, to be honest, I'm scared to meet her. She'll definitely kick my ass. She seems to have become impossibly strong.

That Eris, if she saw Sylphy and Roxy beside me, what will she do?

... Well, the diary didn't mention anything about her attacking Sylphy.

But the diary might not always be right. Depending on how the topic and mood shifts, things can easily go out of hand.

Unease. The way it is, if I meet with Eris again, what will actually happen?

With my mind running in circles I eventually fall asleep.

Hitogami appears.

Part 2

A white space. A place where people travel through using teleporation magic. In there, I stand, the body the same as from my previous life.

According to the research of my future self, this is the Void World. Like a 4th dimensional space in the center of the six worlds.

The old man said coming here is impossible. Yet, here I am.

What does it mean, based on my appearance, maybe only my consciousness is here, like a soul summoned.

" ... "

Hitogami standing there, wearing a smile as usual. No, no smile.

Unhappiness streams from his mosaic body.

"This sucks."

He murmurs unhappily.

"You sure made a mess of things."

That frustration and attitude is almost completely unimaginable from before.

"Coming back from the future, isn't that cheating? Why the hell. Even though I almost won."

Looks like, from how unhappy you are, everything that old man said is true?
You lied to me? You killed Roxy and Sylphy?
So my future self found a loop hole?
Got you in a bind?

"Are you serious? Loop hole? Me in a bind? Pssh, really? The future you seems to have misunderstood quite a few things."

His words might be full of contempt, but I can hear some helplessness in his voice.

I can't let him lead me by the horns. I have to keep him talking.

"What's this [Keep him talking]? Even though you're second rate, you think you're so clever."

Are you done? Even if I'm second rate, I still have a brain.

Hey, you, tell me.

Why my family, why me, why do you have to harm us?

"Indeed, why? Maybe I just enjoy watching you squirm after killing your entire family."

Hitogami is off his game today.

He had me playing in the palm of his hand until now, but I made a complete mess of the board without thinking, and now his motivation is gone.

"Yes, it's all your fault. Not thinking about what you're doing is your fault."

Hey, answer me. I don't care about your goal, and I won't go interfering either.

My future me has said, I can't beat you, so even if I have to suck up to you I won't make you my enemy.

I plan to do that.

Up until now... well, I'm just dancing to your tune, playing in your hand, but up until now has been smooth sailing.

It's fine if I'm being taken advantage of, or you want me to be your arms and legs, I wouldn't refuse. But, at least, spare my family.

"Well, aren't you brave."

Since you really haven't done anything to me yet, or at least, as far as I know.

Relationships are important. Even though you tried to kill Roxy and her baby, but that was aborted. I can pretend aborted things never happen. Let bygones be bygones.

Before I feel I can forgive you, at least we should build a working relationship.

"Ha."

Hitogami seems to have thought of something. His mood changed, then he said.

"What if I say my goal is world peace? Will you believe me?"

Ah, world peace, very noble, I approve.

LOVE and PEACE is my motto, and if my sexy time can contribute to that all the better!

"No sexy time."

Oh.

"You know that Dragon God, that Orsted, right? His ultimate goal is to destroy this world."

Really? I can't tell.

"That guy has been in the background making various moves. When I die this world will also break apart. That's why Orsted has been working to kill me."

Maybe you did something to anger him? Like with me, kill his family or something?

"Didn't I say before? I cannot touch him, so, I do not recall."

Whatever, and then?

"Orsted is strong, but he's only one person, because he carries that curse. Moreover, as long as he's alone, he can never beat me!"

Then just ignore him?

"I thought so too... until you showed up!"

What did I do?

"Nothing.... But it appears that Orsted's curse does not affect your descendants. They'll come to Orsted's aid, and I'll be defeated by Orsted, your descendants, and their allies."

I see... That's why you took aim at the pregnant Roxy?

Say, Luke taking Sylphy to war, that was your doing too. Since you didn't get rid of Lucy, then the problem was the elder son and second daughter? Was that wrong? But if that's the case, then why don't you get rid of me earlier? Why not?

"After realizing your existence after the Metastasis Event, I made various attempts unsuccessfully. Your fate is unusually strong. Nothing I can do about it."

Fate? Why is that?

"Where do I begin? I can see several major paths towards the future, and at some levels I can make small adjustments. But when fate is strong, even I can't do as I please. You do not die against Orsted; no matter how much I interfere, you'll reunite with Roxy, get married, have a child."

Is this cause and effect?

Even if you go to the past to change the future, it'll end roughly the same way?

"Eh, something like that."

Really? Roxy and I getting married is also fate. That makes me happy.

"But that doesn't make me happy."

Ah, sorry. Well then, why do you have to kill my descendants? Why not wait for the distant future and get rid of my descendants... I mean the brats that help Orsted then?

"Those descendants that have direct contact with Orsted also have strong fate like you. Not just you and your descendants, Sylphy's and Roxy's and Eris's existences are also very strong. Their children, well, likely the same. But women's fates becomes particularly ambiguous at times."

The time when strength of fate turns ambiguous... Don't tell me.

"Indeed. When they're pregnant with a child."

Right now, my entire body is a whirlpool of desire to punch this person in front of me, but I force myself to hold back. Even if I fight him here, I don't feel any chances for victory.

"But that too was a failure."

But why did you kill Sylphy, even though she's not pregnant and already had a child?

"Is that what the diary says? Well, I haven't got that far yet, so I don't know either. Maybe I was just exterminating the weeds? Or maybe it had nothing to do with me, rather that Sylphy is fated to die if she's ever separated from you."

That's why... so she has that sort of fate.

"My plan was perfect, to bait you, who has strong fate, bit by bit, and at your weakest use the most effective tactics for the best result."

ARGGH... stay calm.

Don't get angry.

Roxy and Sylphy are both safe.

Good, good.

"Just go ahead and say it. You don't really think you'll win like this? Let me be clear, your children's fate is not as strong as your wives, you, or your descendants. I will not give up. I don't plan to die."

So you don't want to die, eh? So that's what it is. But, is there another way? If it saves my family, I'll do anything. How about I make it my family motto [Do not cooperate with Orsted] or indoctrinate my children. Something like Hitogami-sama is great, Dragon God sucks.

"Useless. That alone won't change fate."

Then help me out here. My fate is strong, right? Then there has to be something I can do?

"... Ah."

You thought of something?

"No, I'm not even sure if it's possible. But it might... You say you would do anything right?"

... Yes, yes.

"Then."

Like he just came up with a new prank, Hitogami smirks.

"Kill Orsted."

Part 3

"Rudi, it hurts, Rudi..!"

When I woke up, I was tightly hugging Roxy. My throat dry, my body chill, and for some reason only my back is warm.

"Ah... Sorry."

"Cough... Cough..."

After I let go, Sylphy places a hand over my face and rubs my forehead. It's covered in sweat.

"Are you okay, Rudi?"

From my back comes a voice. I turn around to look. Roxy's face before my eyes. From behind she hugs me tightly. My back feels warm.

"Sorry."

I sit up, it's late night. Was that a dream? No, that wasn't a dream. Without a doubt, it's Hitogami.

"Cough... What's wrong, Rudi, are you okay?"

Sylphy sits up as well, wiping my sweat with her sleeves. Still Roxy has me in her embrace, and now rubbing my chest.

"It's nothing... Just, it was a, strange dream."

Kill Orsted. That's what Hitogami said. But what does he mean? What was his plan? I need to think this through.

Orsted and Hitogami are enemies. But Orsted is one person, and one person can't beat God.

I don't understand why even someone as strong as him cannot beat Hitogami. Perhaps reaching him requires several companions.

Thus my descendants become Orsted's companions, and as a result Orsted finds Hitogami and beats him.

That's why Hitogami wants to kill my descendants, kill Roxy, kill Sylphy, to erase this entire line.

With that, Orsted can never reach Hitogami's location, and Hitogami wins.

Orsted is the mastermind, my descendants and Orsted, as long as one disappears, Hitogami wins.

But, can I kill him? Hitogami says my fate is abnormally strong, but the same must go for Orsted.

Even though, he makes Hitogami his enemy, and has always been fighting him.

Why will I kill him? What must I use in order to kill someone as strong as him... Is there anything?

My diary records several magic my future self has used.

Magic Armor, that item I can make right now, and once made it will probably be very useful.

My future self used several magic, gravity magic, teleportation magic, even electric magic.

Gravity and Teleportation I don't know... But in our previous fight, even Stone Cannon managed to deal some damage.

Electric shock can even paralyze Atofe, so I have some weapons that can work. Then, I just need some defense, enough to blunt the damage.

... Why am I seriously considering killing Orsted?

"Hey, Rudi, if it hurts, please tell us. Please say something?" ^[12]

Sylphy looks like she's about to cry. With my right hand I embrace her head, and with my left hand I grab Roxy's hand.

Why else? To protect these two.

"There's, there's a person, I must kill him."

"... Eh?"

"Rudi... What are you even talking about?"

I did not answer Roxy. Separated from them two, I left the bed. Instantly warmth disappears, only chill remains.

"Sorry."

With that, I head out the room. My lights lit, my head heavy, I head to my study.

Right now all I can think of is rereading the diary and trying to find inspiration from that old man's battles.

Kill Orsted. Kill him to save my family's life.

Even if we're to perish together, even if my family would grieve, I'll do it.

"..."

Suddenly, I saw the letter I planned to mail together.

"..."

On that letter I added another line.

... Maybe I won't even get a chance to see Eris.

Chapter 4 - Nanahoshi's Hypothesis

Part 1

Be suspicious of the Human God's words, but don't show any hostility.
My future self said so.

Certainly the Human God has told me several questionable things.
The Dragon God plans to destroy the world, or if the Human God dies, the world will end.
Where do the lies end, and the truth begins?
There is definitely a lie somewhere.
However, I shouldn't start thinking that certain parts are lies while others are truth.
If I do so, I might end up in a contradictory situation of falling for his lies.

Honestly, I don't think his displeasure is an act.
The future me certainly dealt an unpredictable blow to him.

Even so.
On that point, the attitude he has taken of [Are you going to turn into my enemy?], has left me no choice.
I don't want to show the Human God any opposition.
Being able to attack the people around me from a place that I can't reach, I don't have the power to protect them.
Then, I can only choose to show my allegiance.
The Human God is detestable, and probably won't honor his promises.
But for the time being, if I try and do as he wishes, if I manage to settle things, there is a possibility that he might overlook me.

The Human God told me to kill Orsted.

Leaving out other parts, the fact that my descendants will join forces with Orsted and kill the Human God in the future seems credible for the time being.

Whether it's me or Orsted.

If just one of us needs to die for the Human God to win, then it's fine if it's me who survives.

I will protect my family.

The one aiming at my family is the Human God but, the Human God is in a place I can't reach.

Since I can't reach him, he will keep aiming at my family.

However, Orsted is in this world.

He's not an opponent I feel I can win against. Frankly, I have no desire to fight him.

However, compared to the Human God, if it's against him there is at least a possibility.

In the end, I want to avoid having someone die because I chose wrongly.

Part 2

On the next day after I met the Human God in a dream, I went with Sylphy to the adventurer's guild and mailed a letter.

Afterwards, together with Sylphy, I returned to the Sky Fortress.

I separated with Sylphy at the entrance, and turned towards Nanahoshi's location.

Having been told to kill Orsted, I wondered who I should consult with and I remembered her.

Probably because of the words my future self left me; consult with Nanahoshi.

Besides, if it's Nanahoshi, she probably has an idea where Orsted currently is.

First, I need to go to her.

Sooner or later, I'll need to discuss this with Sylphy and Roxy as well but... I'm worried that they'll start blaming themselves once they hear the story. Whether it's Sylphy or Roxy or the children, neither of them have any fault in this.

That's why I should choose my words carefully.

As for the correct words to say, I have completely no idea however.

"Hey."

"Oh. You've surprisingly returned quickly, haven't you?"

A few days have already passed but, it looks like Nanahoshi still hasn't completely recovered and is still in bed.

Still, her complexion has improved somewhat.

"Nanahoshi, I've brought some get well presents."

"Sorry for troubling you."

I put the assortment of fruits I bought from the marketplace on the table.

In this season they were a bit expensive but, if you want to ask a favor of someone, there are certain rules of etiquette that need to be followed.

Even if we are in a give and take relationship.

"You're making a scary face. Did something happen?"

Nanahoshi asked with an uneasy look.

I wonder if I'm making such a scary face.

I probably am.

Surely, the face that I have right now is worse than Nanahoshi.

"It's a bit sudden but, I want you to return the favor now."

"What do you want me to do?"

“First I need you to listen, it might sound unbelievable at first though.”

“I understand.”

I slowly talked about how my future self came back to the present.

What we talked about, the events that will happen, what was written in the diary, and how, as if to support them, the Human God appeared in a dream with an irritated face. My descendants that, supposedly, will cooperate with Orsted to kill the Human God. Finally, about the Human God telling me to kill Orsted.

I told her everything.

“ ”

After listening, Nanahoshi seemed as if she was brooding; putting her finger on her forehead.

“ ... sorry. Let me confirm.... Time slip?”

“Right. He said he came from the future.”

“Any proof?”

“The diary had Japanese comments in it, and my true name from my previous life.”

“Your real name, what was it?”

“I don’t want to say.”

“If you don’t want to... But, can you really believe that person?”

“ ... what are you trying to say?”

“It’s possible that he’s another person who tripped into this world. He’s probably pretending to be you from the future.”

“That diary was similar to the same diary I made. It also had similar contents to mine.”

“Even with that, it’s possible it was duplicated while you were sleeping.”

If you keep throwing out skepticism then there would be no end to it.

“ ... But I believe he’s not a fake.”

“That’s fine but, the Human God probably sent him with that in mind.”

“Then you are saying he fabricated the diary, and our entire conversation in my dream was nothing more than an act?”

“I won’t say that but... is the Human God trustworthy?”

“No. he isn’t.”

“But you’re listening to what he says?”

“But... there’s nothing I can do about it...”

Nanahoshi sighed.

And then, as if resolving herself, said:

“To be honest, about the Human God, I also heard about him from Orsted by chance.”

“... Something like that happened?”

“Yes. Immediately after he almost killed you, he talked about him a little.”

“.....”

“He didn’t talk about it in detail but, he said he would definitely kill him. However, he said it was currently impossible for him...”

Orsted moved in order to kill the Human God.

Right now it was impossible. However, it will become possible in the future.

The reason it becomes possible, is it because of my descendants?

Or is it because of the revival of the last Dragon general?

Whichever it is, the Human God wants to prevent it from happening.

For the time being, should I go along with his plans?

The more I think about it, the more I feel there is some credibility to his words.

With that timing and his attitude, would he tell lies?

Did he also foresee that conversation between us?

I have no intention to see through his lies.

No, right now, his objectives don’t matter.

“Well? Why did you talk about this to me? There are other people more suitable, right? Even if you told me, there’s nothing I can do...”

“... My future self told me to discuss it with you.”

“The future you... to me, did he?”

Hearing that, I was too embarrassed to reply.

Should I say it?

There was nothing written about it in the diary but; failing to the very end, the Nanahoshi whose fate I didn’t know about.

No. I feel it’s better to say it.

If she knew she would fail, she can prepare herself. And she can think about methods to avoid that.

“It seems that, until the very end, you failed to return.”

When I said that, Nanahoshi’s eyes opened wide.

However she closed her lips tightly and shook her head.

“Not that. The future you... why did he tell you to discuss it with me?”

“mmmm... about that... He didn’t tell me you died but, perhaps because you know about Orsted’s location, and then, you would be more knowledgeable about this type of thing than me, and would probably be able to think up a plan.”

“This type of thing?”

“Probably, something like what the Human God’s objective is or.....”

If you think about it, the Human God’s objective can be identified.

He’d probably say its world peace but, in short, it’s all for the sake of avoiding his death in the future.

Well, it’s probably a lie but...

“... Hey... can you show me your diary?”

“Sure.”

I handed over my diary and, Nanahoshi opened it from the first page and started flipping through it.

She soon made a frown.

“This, is going to take some time. Your hand writing is dirty too...”

“It took me two days to read it all.”

“Is that so, then, mind giving me a day?”

“You’re going to read it in one day?”

“Reading is my strong point after all. I’ll finish it by tonight”

I wanted to tell her to scan through it and just concentrate on the important parts but, if she reads everything properly, she might be able to understand something.

On that point, I’ll just rely on her.

“Then I’ll rest for awhile. Lately, I haven’t been able to sleep much.”

“I understand. Come back after you’ve rested.”

“I’m relying on you.”

Having said that, I left Nanahoshi’s room.

In that moment, a load was lifted off my shoulders.

I felt relieved.

That’s strange. Did I have that much faith in Nanahoshi?

No. It’s different.

Nanahoshi is someone I confide in on things that I can’t tell to even Sylphy or Roxy.

If I had to say it, it’s because she’s not as important to me that I can rely on her for this.

For me to think that, I’m a cold-hearted person, aren’t I?

"...."

By coincidence I looked outside the window and saw Ariel, Zanoba, Cliff, Sylphy, and Perugius discussing something in the garden.

Luke is standing attentively at the back.

Acting as Ariel's intermediary, Sylphy talked with Perugius. Surprisingly, she has changed a lot from the withdrawn, bullied, Sylphy I knew.

However, according to my future self, in the end Ariel returned to her country without receiving Perugius's cooperation.

And then she lost.

Sylphy had joined her... and died.

Should I lend them a hand?

...No. I have other priorities.

Right now, I need to think about the Human God.

If I can resolve this, the incident where Sylphy dies will probably not happen.

While thinking that, I arrived at my room.

For now, I'll go to sleep.

Part 3

When I awakened, Sylphy was already sleeping next to me.

A close-up of her usual cute, sleeping face filled my vision.

I didn't remember sleeping with her.

That means she probably snuck in sometime after I fell asleep.

If I move, I'll probably wake her.

She probably wanted to talk to me about the discussion with Perugius.

If that's the case, I'm sorry.

I unfastened Sylphy's arms that were wrapped around my waist. After caressing her hair, I left the bed.

"nn.... Rudi... let's kiss..."

With her adorable sleep-talking, and looking at her defenseless sleeping face, this is the part where I would usually get horny.

Unfortunately, I don't have time to think about erotic things.

Fixing my bed hair with my hands, in order not to wake Sylphy, I quietly left the room.

Outside the window, the sky was already filled with stars.

It has already become night time.

Since stars also exist in this world, does that mean space as well?

Thinking about such things, I walked along the hallway.

"Where are you going this late at night?"

"Waa?"

At the corner of the hallway, a man with a yellow mask suddenly called out to me.

".....Arumanfi."

"This is the time when humans sleep. Where are you going at this late hour?"

"To Nanahoshi's room. Has she already gone to sleep?"

"She just asked me for some pen and paper. She's still awake."

"Thank you."

With my heart beating a little fast, I left that place.

I wonder if spirits don't go to sleep.

Well, he's not human for sure.

A 24-hour security guard that gives peace of mind.

"If I remember correctly, the conversations inside the castle can pass through the walls, I think..."

That means, the conversation I had with Nanahoshi has also entered Perugius's ears.

That they aren't saying anything, means that they are just monitoring the situation?

And then not just Perugia's ears, but the Human God's as well...

While thinking that, I silently walked inside the castle and headed towards her room.

Outside her room, light was leaking out from the door's crevice.

It seems she's still awake.

For now, I'll knock.

"Who is it?"

"It's Rudeus."

"Coming this late at night, won't your wife misunderstand?"

"Should I come back tomorrow?"

"It doesn't really matter to me. Come in, please."

Being told to do so, I went inside.

Nanahoshi was still in bed, however, a large number of paper stacks were scattered around her.

"It's a bit disorderly isn't it?"

"It's a result of considering a lot of things."

"Did you manage to find anything?"

I asked while picking up pieces of paper and sat down on a chair.

"For the time being, thanks to your story and diary I have a hypothesis."

"Oh? A hypothesis?"

"I've thought about it for a long time, the reason why I came to this world, this place, this era."

Did that have any relationship with our conversation just now, I wonder?

No. It's fine.

For now, I'll listen.

"In the beginning, I thought it wasn't just me, but my friends as well, who were transferred to this world."

"....."

I wonder if it's fine for me to ask why.

Though I already knew why she wanted to say that.

In the corner of my mind--- remained memories of my final moments in my previous world. A somewhat inexplicable phenomenon.

I tried to save three people who were going to be run over by a truck.

However, there was one person I could not save.

In the end, I ended up being run over by that truck.

And so, I was the only one who ended up getting run over by a truck.

Without being run into, Nanahoshi was transported to this world.

It would not be strange for someone else to be transported to this world other than her.

"But, no matter where I searched in this world, I couldn't find them."

"What's the possibility of them dying as soon as they were transferred here?"

"I thought about it but, even though I safely came here, they died?"

And so, roaming the world together with Orsted, she searched for her friends, did she?

No. That shouldn't be the only reason she traveled around the world.

"There wasn't anything special that happened to me as well."

"Truly? Nothing at all?"

".....?"

I wonder what she's trying to say.

Certainly, there shouldn't be anything.

My life in Buina village, together with Paul, Zenith and Lilia was peaceful.

“I, hearing that your future self came here to the past, hearing that your future self didn’t have any internal organs, wondered if I also came from the future.”

“Ha? What do you mean? Are you saying that in truth, this world’s timeline extends into our previous world?”

“Not that. If I had to say, I wonder if I can explain it. We still don’t know the reason for the teleportation incident, do we?”

“Didn’t that disaster happen because you were transferred here?”

“Yes but, beyond that theory, normally that disaster wouldn’t happen.”

But, that should have been expected since you were transferred from another world.

“However, unlike your case, there was no disaster when my future self came here.”

“Didn’t it happen?”

“What? Where?”

“Didn’t his internal organs disappear somewhere?”

“No..... that’s.....”

Is this what Nanahoshi wanted to say?

That there were similarities in the vanished organs and people being transferred in the teleport disaster?

“After time-travelling fifty years, your magical power dried up.”

“...No, even if you say it dried up, he was still able to use magic.”

“However, at the time he used magic, he also started weakening right? Even though he became a powerful magician, he gave up on healing his injuries.”

Nanahoshi tapped on the front cover of the diary.

“Supposing I came from a hundred years into the future, I would need two persons worth of your magical power, right?”

I realized that Nanahoshi was trying to confirm something.

She probably learned something I still didn't know.

"Your future self fifty years from now, traveled through fifty years and lost his internal organs.

Where did those internal organs disappear to?

Did they remain in the world fifty years from now?

If the time he traveled was a hundred years, would it just end with his internal organs?

In that situation, would his entire body remain in the future?"

"....."

"It's different, right? The entire body would be sent to the same place the organs disappeared to."

"Where would that be?"

"I don't know. It's just, until a balance is reached, everything would be tweaked. This world's magical power should also be following the law of conservation of energy."

The law of conservation of energy.

"I haven't researched it in detail but.... In that incident, humans probably disappeared by the thousands, or tens of thousands."

"....."

"You, after that incident, did you feel nothing wrong with your body? Like your magical power suddenly being drained very low for example?"

After that disaster.

At that time, together with Eris, we encountered Ruijerd and became adventurers at the town of Rikarisu.

I don't think anything happened but....

No, now that you mentioned it, I got easily tired while we were moving towards the town of Rikarisu.

A sluggish feeling, isn't that the same as when my magical power is almost dried up?

"There was but.... then what's the difference between people who disappeared because of teleportation and those who didn't?"

"As the Human God said, there is probably a relation to how strong their fate is? It looks like those who had strong fates didn't disappear."

".... Is that your guess?"

"That and everything else. All of it was conjecture. Didn't I say it was a hypothesis?"

It looks like I have a strong fate.

And it seems the same could be said for the beautiful females around me; Both Sylphy and Eris survived.

In hindsight, my family also had strong fates.

"In short, you're telling me you also time-traveled from the future?"

"No, I'm just wondering if it's fine to think of it like that."

Nanahoshi scratched her head and groaned as if she couldn't explain it clearly.

"For sure, in the future, a situation in which the Human God is defeated will occur."

"...Would it?"

"Yes. That's why the Human God, in order to avoid that, made contact with you. Hey, when did you meet the Human God for the first time? Do you still remember?"

The first time I met the Human God was, right... immediately after the teleport disaster.

No, but, I feel he said something like watching me even before then.

Was that also a lie?

He said he saw me at the teleport disaster.

From which part did he start lying? And where does it end?

“Before the teleport disaster, didn’t you see anything that bothered you?”

Something that bothered me.....

Nothing.

Wait... No, there was something.

In the Fedoa region, inside the room that grandfather Sauros used for sex, from that tower I saw a red sphere.

“That’s a clue, right? Do you still remember when it first appeared?”

When.....?

There’s no reason I would know that....

No, wait... I feel like grandfather Sauros said something about it.

Remember.

Remember.

This body has a good memory. I should be able to remember it.

Mmm... it should be...

“It was discovered just three years before.”

“Around the time I was five years old, I think.”

“When you were five years old, did anything happen? Did you encounter anyone?”

“If it’s when I was five years old, that was the time I met Sylphy, after that, someone else who’s special...”

Suddenly, something in my head connected.

I met with Sylphy and became close to her.

As a result, Paul pulled us apart, and I met with Eris.

And then on my tenth birthday.

I almost did it with Eris.

The teleport incident happened the next day.

And then, immediately after the teleport disaster, I started to have contact with the Human God.

In short, the future where the Human God dies was born because of that?

“Originally, you’re not someone who should have existed in this world, right?”

“Yeah.”

“What do you think is the reason you transferred to this world?”

“I don’t know.”

“I believe that holds some significance.”

“Significance? Like what?”

“Someone, in order to change the future, sent you and me into this era.”

“Someone? Who?”

“Surely, someone from the future. Someone who wants the Human God to die.”

I don’t understand this.

Then, is she telling me that I’m being manipulated by someone?

“I don’t understand. In the end, what are you trying to tell me?”

“I’m saying that in order for the world where the Human God dies in the future to exist, the two of us are necessary.”

This has become complicated.

“I was probably summoned to this world in order to create a method for your descendants to kill the Human God in the future.”

“.....”

“That’s why, as long as I don’t create that method, I won’t be able to return to my original world. My return magic will fail.”

“Why would that happen?”

“Because that’s the reason I was called to this world. In short, my existence is a time paradox.”

Hypothesis.

The reason the Human God dies, is because my descendants and Orsted will kill him.

In order for that to happen, I need to make children.

The moment I met with Sylphy, it was established that I would make children with her.

Looking at the time that the Human God was fixated on Roxy, probably with Roxy too.

The teleport incident happened during a time where I could have done erotic things with Eris. She’s probably connected as well.

After that, it seems the Human God can’t be killed with just my descendants and Orsted alone.

In order for that to happen, there is something important that Nanahoshi needs to do.

And so, Nanahoshi was summoned.

That’s why she said [I came from the future].

Was this done because someone intended it to happen? Or was it some prank of causality?

We don’t know.

Nanahoshi’s hypothesis is that, as a result of what someone did in the future, we were created in the past.

Did the future come first?

Or was it the past?

Did the egg come first? Or the chicken?

“I understand your hypothesis.”

“I’m sorry for being bad at explaining but, I’m glad that you understood.”

It was an interesting conversation.

What comes after is an uninteresting one.

"In short; my descendants, together with Orsted, will kill the Human God. That extent is believable."

"Well, it seems that way."

"Then, let's return to our original issue."

"Original?"

"About killing Orsted."

"That's....."

Nanahoshi knitted her eyebrows.

"Even if your hypothesis was correct, the Human God is aiming to avoid that future. Practically, he's already done that once. Even if our fates are fixed, the future can still be changed."

".....I think it's better if you stop. More than that you should consult with Orsted. Perhaps ----"

"Please stop. The Human God is probably watching our movements at this very moment."

"....."

Hearing that, Nanahoshi looked at the ceiling.

Unfortunately, the void world lies below.

"Something like fate isn't certain. Even if you say that my and Sylphy's fate is strong, my father died, and my mother became an invalid. I don't think the Human God can do anything immediately, but he can see the future. Once he sees me trying to rebel, by the time I return home, there's a possibility Aisha and everyone else would be dead. One year after, two years after, I would continue into a path of misfortune."

"...But, the Human God shouldn't be able to just lay his hands on whoever he wants, right?"

"I wonder about that. If you think that way, then it's also possible he should be able to. It wouldn't be strange for him to hide how powerful he is."

"I can't deny that."

"Besides, in the end, Orsted can't win, right? If you can believe the Human God's word, that is. If my descendants don't help him, he'll lose, right?"

"Well, if we based it on what we know, then yes."

"I will protect my family. The one aiming at my family is the Human God but, the Human God is in a place I can't reach. However, Orsted is in this world. I don't know where he is but, if it's him it shouldn't be impossible."

"But, you can't trust the Human God to keep his word."

"Orsted is the Dragon God. If the diary can be believed, then he probably knows a technique to go to the void world. If I kill him, if the method to travel to the void world disappears, then in reality, the Human God should lose his reason to target my children."

"But, even if you kill Orsted, another method to go to the void world would probably be...."

"Then what should I do!?"

I, myself, was surprised that I shouted at Nanahoshi.

While wincing, once again, Nanahoshi repeated what she said.

"Like I said, you should discuss this with Orsted. Perhaps he can think of something."

"I've already thought about becoming allies with Orsted! However, once that happens the Human God will become my enemy. Going against the Human God by myself would only result in repeating what was written in the diary. If it's just me then I can't win. Then what about Orsted? He'll lose, right!? Since he can't win alone, he trespassed into my life and threw it into disorder to get a chance at victory; and so, in order to avoid a future where he is defeated, the Human God interfered with my life! Do you think someone like that would truly have the flexibility to protect my family!? Would he even have enough power to do that!? Since I don't know that, why should I make the Human God my enemy!? Taking on a losing battle and losing everything, it's too late for that!"

"But! Even then, Orsted is more trustworthy than the Human God."

“I wonder about that. I’ve been told that Orsted would destroy this world. Well, even I wouldn’t believe in that entirely but... The Human God deceived me. He guided me into misfortune with his advice. Are you sure Orsted isn’t deceiving you as well?”

“That... isn’t something I can say for sure.”

Once again, I looked at Nanahoshi’s face.

Fear has been mixed into her facial expression.

“I, whether it’s the Human God or Orsted, I don’t believe in either of them.”

All I know is how powerless I am.

Even if I go against the Human God, I won’t win; I believe those words that my future self left me.

I can clearly imagine a future, similar to that old man, where I lose everything and die miserably.

If I fight with Orsted, I can’t imagine a future other than becoming a tattered rag.

However the Human God told me my fate was strong.

Possibly, he saw a future where I defeated Orsted.

I’ll place everything on that one strand of hope.

“Nanahoshi, since you told me to discuss this with Orsted, then you know a method to contact him, correct?”

“..... Yes. That’s right.”

“Then cooperate with me on killing Orsted.”

“I, also received help from Orsted, you know?”

Nanahoshi became flustered and turned her gaze away.

When Nanahoshi came to this world, the first person she met was Orsted.

And from there, she was probably saved by Orsted numerous times.

In a manner similar to how Ruijerd saved me when I fell into the magic continent.

She doesn't want to betray him.

I also feel the same way about Ruijerd.

Even if she dies, she wouldn't betray him.

Even I can understand to that extent.

If it was the usual me, thinking about what would happen to our current relationship, I would pull back.

However, right now, I have no intention of holding back.

"Hey, Nanahoshi. (previous world name)Nanahoshi Shizuka"

"....."

"Did you know that, before I came to this world, I was nothing more than garbage? I don't know what you think of me right now but... If you saw my previous self, you would clearly look down on him as trash."

"....."

"But you know what? When I came to this world, I decided to start from scratch. I've had my share of failure and loss but, I've learned various things, and now I have something important to me."

"...."

"That is something I want to protect."

I got off my seat.

When you're asking from someone a favor, you shouldn't be sitting on something.

There is a proper way to ask for help.

Go down on both hands and knees.

And beg for help.

Bow down as low as possible.

"I beg you. Please help me."

The floor of the Sky Fortress was cold and hard.

"There's a possibility that the Human God would abruptly change his mind.

I don't want to see a day where I discover that my entire family has been massacred because we hesitated...."

"Wait, what are you doing!? Stop that!"

"I don't want to lose anyone. Please help me."

Nanahoshi got off the bed.

Seizing my shoulder, she forced me to raise my face.

"I understand.... I'll help, so please don't stay in that pose anymore."

Seeing Nanahoshi's tired face, I apologized to her in my head.

At the same time, [It went well], I thought.

Inside my heart, I was assuming a triumphant pose.

"I'm in your debt."

I was probably in the wrong.

However, I no longer had any other option.....

Chapter 5 - Letter Arrives

In the far northwestern edge of the continent.

The Holy Land of the Sword.

It's a place where you can always hear the sound of wooden swords striking and yells filled with fighting spirit.

More than half of the people you'll find walking around in this place can be seen wearing martial arts outfits or similar styles comfortable for fighting in as well as holding a wooden sword and towel in their hands.

Sometimes, people who appear to be swordsmen stay in the city, and almost all of them end up in clothes that make it easy to move around for practice.

Near that town.

Sitting in a land full of snow is the entrance to a large dojo.

Standing there is a woman wearing a swordsman outfit.

Wearing black and flexible clothing from top to bottom.

Worn on top of that is a traditional coat given to Sword Saints from the Sword God Style.

On her waist were two swords of varying sizes, one of which you could tell was made by a very renowned blacksmith from the overwhelming quality it displayed.

Without a doubt, the person wearing a sword of this quality must be one of the best disciples under the Sword God Style and a person of great valor.

If you see her appearance combined with that deep crimson hair, it gives off the image of a lion.

If she were to walk down the road, nine out of every ten people would quickly move out of her path.

She is a Sword King.

Known as [Mad Sword King] Eris Greyrat.

However, putting aside her majestic outfit, she was wearing a face filled with anxiety.

"Hey Nina, is there really nothing strange about this?"

"Yes yes, it's not strange at all. It looks very elegant."

Standing in front of the red haired lion was another woman with dark blue hair wrapped in a martial arts outfit.

It was Nina.

She was starting to get sick of responding to the lion's worries.

"Anyone who looks at you right now will see a great and imposing Sword King."

"But, Rudeus always said he liked more frilly clothes."

"Listen here."

Nina sighed and let out a voice with a fed up tone.

"How should I know if your outfit is strange or what kind of preferences a man would be interested in?"

"I guess that is the case?"

"Why are you looking at me with such pitiful eyes. Even I have already with Jino... No, never mind that."

Nina shook her head and pointed out a finger.

"In the first place, there's no way they would be selling clothes as fancy as that in this area. Where do you think this is? If you want to wear that kind of frilly clothing, go buy some in the city."

"That is true."

Eris was satisfied with Nina's suggestion and nodded.

However, this was already the fifth time they had this back and forth exchange today.

"Even more so, there's no point in worrying about these clothes here. It will take you at least a month to get to Magic City Sharia no matter how fast you hurry."

"..."

"Rather than clothes, make sure you properly clean yourself up before you meet. Take a bath, brush your hair properly, those sorts of things, and... um... it's obvious a woman who just smells like sweat will be hated."

"Rudeus never once made a disgusted face even when we spent time together after sweating."

"Well, it's not as if I can't understand that to some extent, it's something between you and your partner right?"

"Instead, he seemed to be rather happy to smell the scent from my sweat soaked underwear."

"Isn't he just a pervert!"

Eris showed a bit of an offended face in response to those words.

"Rudeus isn't a pervert; he's just a bit ecchi."

"Though, to want to smell your scent? No matter how you look at it, he's a pervert!"

"..."

After hearing that Eris raised her arm and started sniffing around her armpit.

However, all she could smell were freshly worn clothes and the smell of soap.

She had just gotten out of the bath before starting to travel.

"He's not...a pervert."

"Well, maybe I said a bit too much just now."

"..."

The two of them went silent after that.

Their hair was blowing in the freezing wind caused by this cold weather.

"Ghyslaine is rather late."

"She might be having trouble deciding which horse to pick."

"That could be it."

Eris nodded to Nina's words.

"Come to think of it, I have heard a few rumors about your boyfriend."

"What kind?"

"If you see Rudeus Greyrat, your eyes will jump out of their sockets."

"It's quite possible if it's Rudeus!"

"Also, that he likes girls with small chests."

While saying that, Nina looked at Eris.

Eris as well took a look down at herself.

There was a rather voluptuous chest that had been well trained as a swordsman.

"It's alright."

Even though she said that, Eris's face was a bit blue.

"Then, there are more rumors that could be heard all around such as clearing some sort of legendary labyrinth, wiping out an immortal demon lord, and fighting a battle against one of the seven major world powers."

"That's right, as expected of Rudeus after all. It's got to be like that."

Eris's face turned a light shade of red.

She was happy to hear Rudeus had been giving it his all just like her.

"He sounds like quite the monster. Normally, most of these would be pretty unbelievable."

"Right?"

Eris stuck out her chest, broadened her lips into a smile, and let out a breath from her nose.

"Though, I have heard a bit of a weird rumor as well."

"What kind?"

"Rudeus Greyrat is a major playboy, and he's always wandering around with a different woman near him."

Eris's smile stiffened up.

"Somehow, it kind of feels like he's so strong that he's allowed to do whatever he likes?"

"..."

"Hey, Eris, just saying this as example, but could it be that..."

Nina said it with a small voice.

"You've been forgotten?"

Nina moved her left hand with high speed.

In the next instant, there was the sound of Nina catching Eris's fist.

"..."

After catching her fist and being glared at by Eris, Nina avoided her gaze.

"Sorry, sorry, it's just a rumor."

Eris withdrew her fist and crossed her arms.

She stood in a solid pose and turned her usually frowning face away.

"..."

"..."

"Ghyslaine is here."

Eris could see four horses coming in the edge of her sight.

Leading them was a beast race woman.

Sword King, Ghyslaine Dedorudia.

In terms of age, she had already passed 40, though her body was still the same as always as she led two horses by the reins.

Further behind her was a young beauty leading the other two horses.

Dressed in travelers clothes, with hair flowing gently in the wind, she would capture the hearts of anyone who sees her with that seductiveness.

Water God Style King, Isolte Cruel.

On one of the horses she was leading, Water God Reida Ryia could be seen.

"I've made you wait."

While saying that, Ghyslaine led the horses packed with luggage up to Eris.

"Another fight?"

"It's Nina's fault."

Eris made a frown, and Nina shrugged her shoulders.

After seeing that, Ghyslaine whispered [I see] and laughed a bit.

"Really now, Gull-boy isn't even going to come see you off it seems." ^[13]

It was a despondent voice.

The strongest old woman here said that while looking towards the dojo with a displeased face.

"Great Shisho-sama. It's because the Sword God-sama is weak to alcohol."

"You're saying the alcohol from last night still remains? He should realize his age already and stop going overboard. Oh, that's right Nina. We might be able to win right now, so how about we try challenging him?"

The old lady said something to try and incite Nina, but she smiled bitterly.

"No, a swordsman should fight fair and square from the front."

"Such an honest and good child. Well, in the not so distant future, you should be able to win. Give it your best."

"Yes. I will work my hardest to make sure all of my teachings until now won't go to waste."

After bowing her head to Reida, Nina turned to face Isolte.

"Then, what are you guys going to do from here on out? You'll be traveling together with Eris until part of the way, right?"

"Yes. We'll be returning to Asura Kingdom. I was invited to the castle to act as a sword instructor."

"Ah, is that the case? It'll get lonely, won't it?"

After Nina said that, Isolte smiled gently.

"Nina, if you come to Asura Kingdom as well, stop by and pay us a visit. I'll guide you around the city."

"No way. If some country bumpkin like myself goes to Asura Kingdom, they'll end up laughing at me over some strange thing."

After saying that while scratching her nose, Eris blew air from her nose with a [Hmph.]

"It would be fine to beat up anyone who laughs at us."

Nina laughed a bit after hearing what Eris said and remembered exactly who the three people here were.

A Sword King, a Water King, and a Sword Saint.

The only ones who would be able to laugh at them would be some strong being, out of their reach, or a fool.

"Eris, it's about time we head off."

"I know."

After replying in an energetic voice, Isolte made a bitter smile and jumped onto the horse.

Eris jumped onto her horse as well.

The horse started to struggle from how roughly it was treated, but it returned to being docile when Eris pounded its neck.

"Everyone stay well."

Before anyone had realized, tear drops started to appear in Nina's eyes.

These past few years.

She was remembering the times since Eris's arrival.

It was a bad meeting.

Starting with humiliation, she had been forced to understand bitterness countless times.

However, thanks to that, Nina learned to use the mortifying experiences as springs and learned from them.

Since Isolte came here, she was saved countless times by her gentle mannerisms and way of speaking.

If it weren't for these two, she would just be another one of those Sword Saints laying around all over the place.

Never able to rise up to the stage known as Sword King.

In other words, if it hadn't been for these two...

"Hello. Mailman here, could someone please sign here?"

Then, they heard a voice from out of nowhere.

After brilliantly destroying such a moving moment, Nina was a bit irritated and faced the voice.

There was a man wearing heavy winter clothes.

He made a face as if he didn't understand what was going on with the people gathered here and then took out a single letter from his bag.

"Jeez, who is it for?"

"Umm, Eris Boreas Greyrat-sama."

After hearing that, Eris raised her eyebrows and then opened her eyes after hearing the next words.

"From Rudeus Greyrat-sama."

"Rudeus!"

Eris immediately jumped off the horse and stole the letter from the man. Then the moment she was about to tear open, the letter was grabbed by the man.

"Just a minute, please sign. If I don't have that, I can't get the compensation."

"Where?"

"Ah, please wait just a second."

The man then took out something like a receipt and a board out of his bag and handed it to Eris.

Eris took the board and thought for a few seconds.

Trying to remember how to write letters.

Then, with bad handwriting, she wrote the name Eris Greyrat.

After looking at those letters for a bit, she nodded and said [Alright.]

"Yes, thank you very much. It's a pretty good job after all."

After the man confirmed that, he quickly headed off and returned to the north.

Eris couldn't care less about the man at all and just took the letter.

After breaking the seal, she found the letters Eris Boreas Greyrat shown.

It was certainly Rudeus's handwriting.

(Jeez, Rudeus must have been in a hurry, my name is no longer Boreas. Ah, he must not know.)

Then on the back, she noticed Rudeus Greyrat written very thoroughly.

He's as methodical and complete as always, while it still gives the feeling that it's missing something.

Eris smiled a bit while remembering how she always used to learn by reading and repeating this handwriting.

Then, she used a nail to open the end of the letter.

It wouldn't open.

After crunching away at it, trying to tear it open three or four times, she put her hand on the sword at her waist.

After throwing the letter into the air she pulled out her sword.

"Hah!"

A flash.

The letter wasn't cut into pieces, but there was just a clean cut on the end as it fell down into Eris's hands.

Eris pulled open the cut end and took out the paper inside.

Then, with an excited expression, she started to read it.

Started to read it and continued to read it.

However, that expression gradually changed into something unpleasant.

"Hey, Eris, what is written?"

"...?"

After Nina asked, there was no answer from Eris.

She just kept staring into space with a scary face.

"Hey, answer me~"

"Shut up! There's just a few too many words I don't know, so I can't read it!"

"Ah, is that so?"

"Nina, you read it!"

"Eh? I can't read words either."

"What! If you can't read words when you need to, then you'll be in trouble!"

"Even though you say that so arrogantly, you can't even read it yourself!"

During that argument, Isolte got off her horse.

"Well, calm down a bit. I'll read it."

"Ah, yeah. Please do."

Eris obediently gave Isolte the letter.

Isolte let her eyes scan over the page. Slowly reading it to herself.

However, her face gradually changed into something grim.

"What is with this person?!"

"Wh..what? What's written?"

"Eris. You've been giving your best until now for this person? Ah, how pitiful. Milis-sama, please save this poor child!"

After saying that, Isolte started praying to the sky and looked at Eris with eyes filled with pity.

"I won't say anything bad, but Eris, don't bother going to Sharia and come with us to Asura. There's no reason for you to be cheated by a bad man."

"It's fine, just tell me what is written there right now, or I'll beat you down!"

"I understand. Listen carefully now, this is what's written."

Eris put her hand on the sword at her waist, and Isolte started reading the letter with a voice filled with anger.

"Dear Eris-sama,

This is Rudeus Greyrat.

Time has flown by these past five years since we separated.

Do you still remember me?

I will probably never be able to forget that time.

The first night together with you. I swore in my heart to remain together with you for the rest of my life.

However, when I woke up the next morning, you were nowhere to be seen.

The feelings of loss and collapse at that moment brought about a deep darkness upon my heart.

The next three years were certainly painful, miserable, and empty.

Naturally, I don't hold a grudge about that any more.

Still, I would be greatly blessed if you could comprehend how deeply sad I felt at that time.

Now then, the reason I am sending this letter is because a certain person advised me in regards to your feelings.

I thought without a doubt that you wanted to completely cut off ties with me and set off on a trip by yourself.

However, this person informed me that it was all my misunderstanding and your feelings were always directed towards me.

Currently, I have two wives.

Both of them saved me from the dark and deep suffering I was experiencing.

Even in the case that there was a misunderstanding about how you felt about me, it is still a fact that I was deeply depressed and that they saved me.

However, in the case that you honestly feel the same way about me,

If you still wish to marry me and still wish to live together with me,

I have made arrangements to accept you.

Though you might feel unhappy about this, I have absolutely no intention of separating from my current family, so you would become my third wife.

In the case that you feel unhappy about this, I have already resolved to receive your fist.

In regards to this, please forgive me after two or three hits.

However, if possible, I do not wish to fight with you.

I feel even if you do not wish to become a member of my family, we could form a fine friendship.

That is all.

From Rudeus Greyrat."

" ... "

After hearing the contents of that letter, Eris stiffened up.

After seeing Eris stiffen up, Isolte started spitting out words in disgust.

"He's a cruel man isn't he! He already has two wives and takes the attitude of [It's fine if you become the third]! I can't help but think he is looking down on women!"

"Is that right? I think he put a considerable amount of thought into writing it."

Nina objected to Isolte with her opinion after hearing the contents of the letter.

"Consideration?! It's the first letter in a long time and not even a single word of love is mentioned?! That's not all, talking about somehow or other accepting her as if he's looking down from above! I can't bring myself to like this Rudeus person!"

"It's written that he thought he was thrown away by Eris and experienced three years of suffering isn't it? I think Eris has some responsibility for neglecting him as well!"

"That is obviously just an excuse! He's clearly just after Eris's body and her skill with the sword."

"No, if he's only after that, isn't it a bit risky considering that it is Eris?"

Isolte swelled up in anger, and Nina groaned.

Eris stood in a pose with her arms crossed staring at the sky.
There was no longer a single thing reflected within those eyes.
The sky is blue, and the heart is pure white.

"Oh? There was one more piece of paper."

Then, Isolte found another piece of paper in the letter.
After taking it out she started reading it aloud.

"Ummm, let's see what's written here."

"Postscript.

I am about to challenge the Dragon God Orsted to a battle.
I don't know if I will be able to kill him.
I may no longer be in this world by the time this letter reaches you.
In the case that I am able to return home alive, let us continue this conversation."

By the time Isolte had finished reading it her face had completely stiffened up.

Nina had also stiffened up.

That expression was filled with fear.

They felt nothing but fear towards the words [Challenge the Dragon God Orsted to a battle.]

However, a smile appeared on Eris's face.

Those eyes had already regained their light; they were filled with the flames of madness and resolve.

"I'll be late if we don't hurry."

After saying that Eris jumped onto the horse.

Only one thing remained within her mind at this point.

"Ghyslaine, we're going!"

Eris yelled while taking off on the horse.

The horse kicked away snow while running forward, and Ghyslaine followed after that.

The two took off in the direction of the man who sent the letter just now and, in no time at all, were too far to be seen.

Nina and Isolte just continued to see them off with nothing but a dumbfounded expression.

Chapter 6 - Preparation

Part 1

A month after the conversation with Hitogami.

Killing Orsted won't be a cake walk. He is the world's strongest!

Obviously, that means he is even more overwhelmingly powerful than Ruijerd, Atofe, and Perugius.

I can't even beat them, then how am I going to beat Orsted?

Thus, I come up with three plans.

Three.

Everything comes in threes.

Three little pigs, three good luck charms, etc.

1. Develop magic armor
2. Find a partner
3. Research battle tactics

First things first, develop magic armor. If what's written on the notebook is to be believed, then with that armor I can obtain superman-like physical ability.

With that, the future me becomes incredibly powerful, so that's a must.

First I purchased a small house near the edge of Magic City Sharia. Originally I wanted to borrow a space at the Sky Castle, but Perugius refused.

About how the conversation went with Perugius, I'll talk about it later.

I requested the help of Cliff and Zanoba, even though I didn't explain in details, they accepted my request.

I asked Cliff to expand the Zariff's Arm system, and Zanoba to design the body structure and locomotion.

Their eyes glittered as soon as I said magic armor, and soon got the idea. Even though power suits don't exist in this world... What boys long for, is probably the same in every world.

Next I asked Sylphy and Roxy to help.

Roxy became the project supervisor. Even though I can supervise the project myself, but only I could manufacture and refine the high strength stone needed for the shielding of the magic armor.

A very time and magic consuming process, so I can't spare time for anything else.

Sylphy can do Earth Magic with voiceless incantation. She is also well versed in magic circles, probably as a result of her research into the Metastasis Event. What I mean is, she's really high-spec.

Since she can do everything, I had her be Roxy's assistant, helping out when anyone needs a hand.

When I asked for help, Sylphy happily replied, "You can count on me." Somehow it feels like ages since Sylphy was this happy.

Maybe she has been tolerant.

She put up with a lot of things recently.

I'm sorry.

Anyways, in parallel of the above, number 2 was find a partner.

Initially I thought about fighting alone, but I don't have the skill for that. Unlike the future Rudeus, I lack the combat experience.

But I couldn't find a partner of that caliber either. Badigadi is missing. Ruijerd isn't here, and Perugius obviously refused.

Perugius said this.

"In this world there are three people you should never fight: Technique God, Fighting God, and Dragon God. Among those three, Dragon God Orsted is the strongest and the most ruthless. Even though I respect your determination to protect your family, and am curious of that Human God... I do not want to get involved. Until Laplace revives, I don't plan on dying."

Even though I was hoping to trick him into helping somehow, but that looks to be impossible. On this side, I should just be thankful that he isn't going to interfere.

Thus, outside of Perugia, I couldn't find anyone else capable of standing up to Orsted.

Even though I can bring Zanoba, but if Atofe can deal that sort of damage on the miko, then there's no question that Orsted could as well.

I don't want Zanoba to die. He is my closest friend.

Same goes for Cliff and Elinalise. I don't want them to die either.

When it comes down to it, there's no one that can fight with me.

Suddenly, I thought of Eris. I don't know when she'll come, but according to the diary, she was a match against me even when I wore the magic armor.

If she arrives in time for my preparations, and we were able to settle things, then maybe I can beg her for help.

I might be too selfish.

For now, number 2 will have to wait. Finally number 3, research battle tactics and simulate the attack.

A solo fight to the death, there are plenty of ways about it.

Since there's no chance of collateral damage, as long as I can keep the distance, I can employ plenty of area of effect spells.

As long as the range is large enough, there should be no way to avoid it. A direct strike spell like [Lightning] might deal more damage, but a person like Orsted would probably avoid it somehow.

In that case, then my best chance is to stand at range and just keep throwing area spells one after another. You can't use [Magic Disrupt] if the opponent is beyond your field of vision.

If I sneak attack Orsted in a moment of negligence, then maybe I might break through his defenses.

Thus, my best bet might be to set up a trap, lure him into somewhere empty, put something there for him to pick up, and hit him when he does.

The problem is how do I lure him in... Maybe I can take Nanahoshi hostage, or maybe I can use Hitogami, anything as long as it works.

Next, of course, just range attacks alone won't be enough to take him. Well, maybe I could, but it's better if I plan for the worst.

Afterwards it's close combat in the magic armor, but this is uncharted territory. Can my mind even keep up in a high speed fight..? This I won't know until the magic armor is ready.

Thinking like this reminds me of when I just came to this world, when I busied myself with tactics to beat Paul.

Even though I wanted to beat Paul at least once, I never ended up getting my wish.

But tactics from then still root deep in my memories. I'll just go with those, a mix of magic and physical combat, a 3D fight.

No matter the enemy, the tactics remain the same.

Keep the distance, attack unilaterally.

Don't let up, force his every move.

That is the best.

But Orsted knows [Magic Disruption], and Dragon Gate too. He definitely has other moves up his sleeves. In a magic fight, I might not have the advantage.

Traps, sneak attack, and what else? Can I beat him? I need to think this through.

I want to do 3 things, but only got to 2. Truth be told, I'm aware of how impatient I'm acting. I'm too shortsighted.

I know that ideally, if I spend more time refining and practicing my tactics, like for ten years...

I'm well aware that I should spend more time planning and testing my strategies. Like spend 10 years to come up with ways to drive Orsted into a corner, that might work the best.

But if I take my time, Hitogami might have a change of mind halfway through. If someone dies before I could notice, I'd regret forever.

Part 2

While I was making those moves.

Hitogami reappears in a dream.

A snow white space. I'm in the middle of a empty world.

"Wow, it has progressed better than I expected."

Yes.

Just as you instructed, I will fight Orsted.

"Fighting alone isn't enough. If you don't kill him..."

You seem to be in a good mood.

Do you really enjoy having me dance in the palm of your hand that much?

"Even I can't tell the outcome, how exciting!"

Right.

By the way, since you're appearing like this, in other words, what you said before, that you can't appear without matching frequencies, that was a lie?

"Yep. I lied."

You shameless bastard...

Then I guess you can only contact specific individuals was a lie too?

"Yep. That too. But don't you feel special to be chosen by God?"

Pssh...

Well, forget it.

Eventually I will tell Sylphy and Roxy about fighting Orsted.

If I die, my descendants will surely consider Orsted their father's murderer and hate him, that's why...

"That alone won't be enough to change their fate. If you don't kill him for me, I will wipe them all out. No matter how long it takes."

Wipe out? Don't say something so scary.

Anyways.

Regardless, finishing the magic armor will take a while.

The principles are completely uncharted territory, even Cliff is feeling stuck.

I'm putting my all in development as well... but it would take at least half a year more.

"Cliff, let him concentrate on magic circles needed to strengthen the armor core. You just focus on the necessary stone shielding and joints. For magic circles for rest of the body, use the Arrestar method ^[14] instead of Vindo ones^[15]. That should do it. Also, get Zanoba to design it a little bigger. That way, the consumption increases, but you can lay a redundant magic circle layer under the first one. With the two layers repairing each other, you can still move even with major damage."

Eh, ehh?

Aren't you well informed?

"Of course, I'm Hitogami! Since I know about Fighting God's armor, I can give you some pointers."

Hitogami...

Say, people of this world call you Human God.

What's up with that?

Is Hitogami your alias?

"Human God is just a nickname. Hitogami is my real name. Somehow or another the Human God name becomes known instead." ^[16]

That sounds like a lie.

Well, it doesn't matter what you call yourself.

Hey, will I win?

With magic armor, traps, and sneak attack?

"Well... your magic equals Laplace. If you put in the effort, who knows what might happen?"

How irresponsible.

Can't you give me your usual advice and help me win?

"Then, go pick up some magic tools. The sort that shoots when you pour magic into it. You can find those on sale anywhere. Those things have limiters for regular people. But if you really want to, you can channel as much magic through it as you like. Sky is the limit. Like that Zariff's Arm you guys made, make a magic tool with enormous output that only you can handle."

Oh, I see.

You actually offered some pretty good advice this time.

"Since you have been a harder worker than I expected, I ought to offer a hand as well. My desire to see Orsted dead is true."

... Feels likes you have some hidden motives again.

Tell me the truth, for the magic armor too, nothing will blow up during the production process, right?

"... Whose life will you wager for the answer to the question? Aisha? Norn? Lilia? Zenith?"

Pssh...

I can't win.

"I cannot see Orsted's future. Of course, nor the result of your battle with him. That's why I do not know."

I see.

If you can't, then that means you don't know why you lost either.

"Indeed."

Say, if you can't see Orsted's future, then why did you know my descendants and Orsted will work together?

"Even though I cannot see Orsted's future, I can see my own. Your descendants and a man I never saw before had me surrounded, with Orsted present in that moment."

So you can see yourself. Then what happened? You got your ass kicked?

"Resists in vain and brutally murdered."

By the way, what did you do to Orsted anyways? Must be something awful for him to want you dead.

"What can I say? I don't remember anything about him."

Don't want to tell me, or you really don't know?

Well, whatever.

Your words are full of lies. Whatever you say, there's no way to trust them.

"How rude! I should have you know, my only lie against your interests was the basement."

So all the suggestions up till then was to build up to that one time?

"Yep, just as you said. But if Roxy and you don't leave a child, I won't have to lie in the first place."

Then you should have just told me not to have a child with Roxy! Why do you have to go through all that trouble?

"The child will be born. No matter what I say, Roxy will have your child. That is fated. Even if I adjust... no matter how I adjust, that future will come."

So it was destined...

No, sorry for losing my temper.

Indeed, Roxy and I married and had a child.

In retrospect even I felt I made strange moves at times, so that must be fate.

If that fate makes you unhappy, I'll change it, Hitogami.

As you instructed, I'll kill Orsted.

But before that, let me ask for one more.

"What is it?"

Once I kill Orsted, please leave me alone, and please leave my family alone. Promise me that.

"Hey, do you really think I won't keep my promises?"

I don't.

I do think... what if killing Orsted is also a lie?

And when I thought that, it makes me wonder whether betraying you, and siding with Orsted, would be a better choice.

"Go ahead and try. Indeed I cannot kill you, nor can I kill Orsted, but prepare yourself. Do you really want to enjoy the wrath of God?"

But you could be bluffing.

Maybe you're just all talk.

Always so coy with me.

Maybe you're scared if I become your enemy?

"Your fate is strong. I was merely trying to nip the problem in the bud. Ah... forget it. Not like you'll believe anything I say. Go ahead and underestimate me and see. Goodbye, enjoy your regrets."

Ah... Wait. I'm sorry.

Just ignore what I said. Hey, wait up!

I just want some guarantees.

You said that if I lose to Orsted you'll kill my whole family.

On the other hand, if I did kill Orsted, what says you won't change your mind and kill them anyways?

Under these circumstances, demanding that I beat Orsted and etc, staying motivated poses a challenge.

"... Mm. You have a point. Fine, this is a promise. I, swear by my name as Hitogami, if you are to win against Orsted, thus eliminate my worries, then we shall cut all ties. You, your wives, your parents, your sisters, your descendants, even your body I shall not lift a finger, a toe, or a mouth against it."

Really, promise?

"How about, I throw a little help your way when your family is in trouble?"

... No, I'm done with your advice.

"Well, then, do your best."

Part 3

A month passed since that dream.

Magic armor development has proceeded smoothly. Following Hitogami's advice, we enlarged the armor.

Standing some 3 meters tall, about half of an Aura Battler ^[17].

The magic armor in the diary only covers my body, so this is even bigger.

We learned a lot by making it bigger.

The engineering got easier, but it also became more robust.

All in all, an excellent suggestion.

After hearing Hitogami's advice, Cliff had an inspiration, and quickly found solutions to previous bottlenecks.

I thought it would take six months, but it progresses far faster than I expected.

According to schedule, it'll take another month.

It'll only take three months....

Under different circumstances I might even thank Hitogami.

How ironic.

The magic armor my future self developed to fight Hitogami.

Now created with his advice.

Thinking of that, I can't help but feel suspicious.

But Zanoba and Cliff made it.

I believe in them.

We looked into magic tools as well, Roxy helped with this.

Just as Hitogami said, we found them rather quickly on the street somewhere, a tube shaped magic tool.

On a [Fire!] command, it can shoot off basic magic.

For a magic tool it's relatively popular, but not a particularly powerful one.

As a way to hit a running thief from a distance, it has occasional uses.

According to Hitogami, if we modify this so it can handle my magic power, then I should be able to use it to fire off my standard Stone Cannons.

Suddenly I had an inspiration. What if I increase my output, inject even more magic power, if I tie like 10 of them together, then maybe I can rapid fire?

Maybe with that, my typical Stone Cannon can evolve into something like a gatling gun!

When I said that to Roxy, she only nodded with a deadpan expression.

"Rudi's magic is strong, but even you can only fire one shot at time. Good idea. I know a magic tool maker. Let me get in touch with her."

After saying that, Roxy went to contact the magic tool maker she only recently met.

She's a Long Ear Race not often seen in this region.

Even though Long Ear Race are all born beautiful, her nails are covered in ashes, her face caked black, a true professional.

She was shocked by the idea.

"Say, if I make it to your specifications, then the magic consumption each time would be enormous. If you're sucked dry by the magic tool, you could even die!"

That was a warning. I might die.

Is that Hitogami's real goal? But I can fire ten, twenty thousand Stone Cannon a day without feeling drained.... Well, who cares. I would be dead either way once I ran out of magic.

This time if I don't push my magic to the limit, I won't win.

"It's fine. I'm counting on you."

After that said, the Long Ear Race professional could only nod reluctantly.

Regardless, I got my close combat weapon.

I pray that it works.

On the way back, I talked a bit with Roxy.

"I don't know who Rudi plans to fight, but is making that really necessary?"

"I can win even without it."

I said that to give Roxy a peace of mind.

But Roxy pouted her mouth and looked back with suspicion.

"Rudi used to be a good kid that never lies, but recently there's nothing but lies and secrets."

Hearing that from her really hurts, but, lies and secrets, that has always been the case.

"Sorry..."

"No, it's fine. I have my own secret. But Rudi, I talk it out with other people. I don't mind if Rudi doesn't tell me, but please talk to someone? Don't try to carry everything by yourself."

"Don't worry."

I have some idea of Roxy's secret.

Recently, she has been avoiding sexy time with me.

Even though I haven't really pushed the topic, but I think she's intentionally avoiding the subject.

She hasn't had any morning sickness yet, and her appearance looks the same, but she's probably pregnant.

When will she finally announce it?

After the first trimester?

Or she's going to stay silent until my things are settled?

No matter what, I hope she will announce it before my Orsted fight.

I want to host a grand party for it.

Because it might be my last.

Part 4

Next day, I went to visit Nanahoshi.

I thought I would be refused entry, but I was let through.

Perugius might fear Orsted, but he's rather lenient here.

"I thought I would be barred."

"Perugius is generous towards those about to die. Of course he'll allow you to say your last goodbyes with Nanahoshi."

Sylvaril answers like a matter of fact to my question. They really consider me a dead man walking. I guess this is just fulfilling my last wishes.

Well, that's fine. I accept their generosity.

Nanahoshi has since regained her old energy.

Seems like she brought out a few more personal items in her research lab. It feels less sterile than before.

A Ruijerd figure decorates the window. Must be a present from Zanoba. And the cross must be from Cliff.

Count on God when hardship comes. It won't hurt. Even though I didn't believe in God before coming to this world, but right now I can appreciate it.

"This is the situation. My prep work is mostly complete. All that's left is how to lure him in. I was hoping to discuss this with you."

"... I understand. But, I should have you know, Orsted is incredibly strong."

"Yes."

"He will show no mercy. I don't know how he selects his targets, but he won't hesitate to kill."

"..."

"During the several years I spent with him, I have never seen him struggle in a fight. Even taking gigantic dragons in one shot..."

"Please don't say anymore. You're scaring me."

"Sorry... but would you please reconsider? About killing Orsted..."

"I already..."

"Ah, sorry, I understand."

I'm a bit uneasy now. Can I really... win?

"Basically, I don't recommend you a straight fight."

"Right. Even with augmented strength, I don't think I can win."

"Lure him somewhere, then... while hiding you attack with magic. I think that's your best chance."

"Yes. Anything else come to mind?"

"Let me think... Ah!"

"Thought of anything?"

"... I only say this because I want to help you."

"Go ahead."

Nanahoshi swallows before continuing.

"Poison. It might work."

Poison.

Even though Detoxification Magic exists in this world, but there are poisons and diseases that those magic cannot treat also.

I don't know how well versed Orsted is in this area. Still, it won't hurt to try. If I ask Ariel about this, will she help? As royalty, she should be familiar with this.

"Poison, traps, and attack from a distance... Oh yeah, Nanahoshi, will you be my hostage?"

"Hostage... that's not impossible, but whether Orsted will actually come for me, I don't know."

"That's true too... and if he found out you're in on it, then even Nanahoshi might get in trouble..."

"Ah, yeah, right. I haven't thought of that."

Well, forget it. Looking from her perspective, right now I'm basically acting like Hitogami would.

Even though I know it might be effective, I don't want to give the other side too much motivation.

In battle, suppressing the enemy's morale is important too.

"Any other ideas?"

"Let's see... in our old world, how do fights against a strong opponent in manga usually go again?"

"Don't bother. I doubt consulting manga will get you anywhere.."

...

...

After meeting with Nanahoshi, we come up with a few ideas.

Even I thought they're rather sly.

Although I don't think these little tricks would really work on Orsted.

No, even if they're basically pranks, but enough of them together might do something.

I don't think they'll all be pointless.

"Well... then... do your best."

"Yeah."

"If you don't come back, I might not either."

After talking with Nanahoshi, the plan to lure Orsted was ready too.

Part 5

I went to Ariel to ask for help.

She looks bothered when I ask for poisons that can't be detoxed.

Regardless, she still introduced me to a shady organization she has contact with.

That organization started off as a thieves guild. Roughly speaking they're basically a gang or a mafia.

They traffic anesthetics and bootlegs, and even poisons for assassinations.

I was taken to the basement of a run down house somewhere in Magic City Sharia, a room with overwhelming fragrance.

Waiting there is an one-eyed man in charge.

"Welcome, Rudeus-san, nice to meet you."

He laughs like he knows of me.

"So what do you need? The slow kind? The fast kind? The kind that numbs the legs? Or the kind that keeps magicians from using their tongue? Or maybe the kind that would make your woman soaking wet, if your nights have been a bit dry. Why not give that a try?"

From poison to numbing agents to aphrodisiacs.
Perfect.

"All of it."

"All... Well, fine with me, but it's a little pricey?"

"That's fine."

"Haha, so you have someone you want dead... Even the aphrodisiacs? Want that?"

"Well-"

Suddenly, poisons won't work on Orsted, that thought flashes in my mind.
A poison that detoxification doesn't work on, anyone would have thought of that.

Since Orsted was cursed to be hated, he should also have been subjected to assassination attempts by poison.

Maybe he has built up a tolerance, or maybe has an universal antidote of some kind.

"That too."

"Hehehe, even you want to see that straight laced wife of yours go wild sometimes."

"My wife is playful in bed."

"That Silent Fitts... I can't imagine."

Well, I don't know what good aphrodisiacs would do, but I have some expectations. If it can effect the body just a little, it's worth a try.

Thinking that, I bought the drugs.

At the same time, I have been picking my battle grounds.

Since I plan to fight solo, it needs to be far from the cities.

Far from the city, not a soul in sight, then setup my traps there.

Collect information from the Adventurer's Guild, and once obtained, check out the location in person.

Also, on trap making, via Elinalise I was introduced to an adventurer to tutor me.

He was originally an assassin, because of that he knows how to construct traps for men.

Traps using psychology.

I tried a few traps myself, no matter how careful, I was always caught.

Even though I doubt their effectiveness against Orsted, but they're better than nothing.

I also was tutored in close combat by Elinalise.

Though her talent lies in group combat, so in 1v1 she's a bit lacking.

But, after living for so long, she has her share of experience. Until now she has fought many difficult opponents. Even though strength-wise she's middling, she still survived until now.

In my heart, I really wish I could consult Badigadi or Ruijerd for this, but complaining now is pointless.

Perugius won't help either.

Meanwhile, I start to think about combat with magic armor.

Attach the magic tool on the magic armor, spam Stone Cannon at will.

Likely a fight where I'm constantly on my back foot.

Spam my shots, use quagmire and fog to restrict movement, and when an opportunity arise fire off the big guns.

Straight forward.

Finally.

I lift the ban to the basement to pray for victory at my shrine.

Two months after killing the rat. I can trust my future self. After so long, any germs from Magic Stone Disease should have died off.

But, I still forbid Roxy from entry, and anyone who enters must do a thorough cleaning.

Mostly for my peace of mind.

While I was there, I dug around for anything useful against Orsted.

The magic tools in the basement are all junk.

They're soaked by [Frost Nova], but luckily they still work.

A hat that produces water after you wear and remove it.

A hat with a gemstone that glows when worn, a flashlight replacement.

A box that produces heavy smoke when opened.

A short sword that turns sticky when it strikes an opponent.

A really smelly shoe when worn.

Lots and lots of junk.

If they're, well, stored away like this, they can't be too useful.

Maybe if I ever need do tricks on the street.

The fog box might come in handy. But I'm not sure how to use it against Orsted. It would probably be difficult.

They're pointless if Orsted knows the trick, but some might be useful, so I'll take a few with me.

Before leaving the basement, I pray once more for victory at the shrine.

Serious this time. Do it twice.

Preparations progressed steadily.

But in my heart, doubt remains, too stubborn to leave.

Really, would it work?



Chapter 7 - Preparation Complete

Part 1

Another month passed.

The magic armor is complete.

In only 3 months.

Halfway through, I began to throw around large amounts of money, employing workers to complete menial tasks to finish it in time.

It came out roughly as planned, about 3 meters tall.

Since the fight will be inside a forest, it was painted black and tea-colored, a dark green shade.

From top to bottom it is colored in my specialty made rugged plate armor, fat and round, not an ounce of sportiness.

Suit up from behind.

A man sized hole opens up in the back of the suit. It fits like a glove.

Once activated with magic, it moves like part of the body.

There's also a separate armor plate on the back.

A magic circle is inserted on the back plate. In case of emergency, I can quickly activate it with a simple chant to escape.

The magic gatling cannon is installed on the right hand.

Made to fire Stone Cannon.

When I use my full power, it can fire up to 10 rounds a second of my highest level Stone Cannon.

It can turn typical Magic Beasts into minced meat instantly.

Designed specifically to counter Orsted's [Magic Disruption].

On the left hand I installed the magic absorbing stone.

I don't know whether Orsted will use magic or not, but in case [Magic Disruption] fails, it should come in handy.

Since it can counter already completed magic, better if I have it installed.

For hand to hand combat, I have a weaponized shield.

Although I have some sword skills, but they're probably useless against Orsted.

Thus I decide to focus on defense.

Compared to a dull sword, brute force and blunt trauma should be much more effective.

Defense is the best offense, in other words the law of the tank.

While I was at it, I installed Paul's sword on the shield's peak.

Not the one he always had, but the Tantou ^[18] that can ignore armor.

Although I have my doubts against Orsted...

As a result, it ended up rather pretty majestic, but that might be the wrong word for it.

Gatling cannon and a rough shield with sword attached, a complete mismatch with this world.

This monstrosity currently rests on the outskirts of Magic City Sharia.

Lying flat.

Too heavy to stand.

"Oh! Cool!"

"Not bad, a bit heavy, but quite nice."

"Really? I thought Rudeus would want something a bit more limber."

"Honestly, it looks like crap."

"... It looks like a monster, can't you have it in a different color?"

Zanoba and Cliff look satisfied, but the girls have their doubts.

I'll chalk that up to the difference between men and women.

But Julie has a face of satisfaction, so I guess I can't write off all women like that.

If I can return safely, I want to get Aisha's and Norn's opinion on this too.

Well, style points don't matter.

"... Next, I want to do a final test run."

I review my surroundings.

Sylphy, Roxy, Zanoba, Cliff, and Elinalise.

Julie and Ginger also came.

Nanahoshi isn't here.

She'll help lure Orsted for me.

But her primary goal is to return home.

Since the plan is [I coerced her to help me], it's better if we don't stay together when unnecessary.

Right now, she's studying Summoning Magic with Perugius at the Sky Castle.

There's still a chance that Orsted might come after her afterward, but with a pale face Nanahoshi accepts the unavoidable.

In the end, I never got to learn Summoning Magic...

Oh well. After this is done, I'll try asking Perugius again.

"Well then, show us what you got."

After saying that, Roxy sat down with Julie at a distance, on chairs prepared for the occasion.

Roxy's tummy isn't prominent yet, but it's obviously growing.

She won't be able to conceal it much longer. I hope she will announce it soon.

But this is a bad time for me.

After the battle is over, the kid will be born...

No no no.

Now is not the time for this.

I need to focus.

I will win, the child will be born, and I will name the child, and work hard on the third one.

The future awaits me, good.

"Alright, I'll suit up. Sylphy, Zanoba, and Elinalise, you three come at once. Cliff, please activate your Identification Eye. If you notice something, I'm counting on you."

"Got it."

"Understood."

Nods two of them, Elinalise lifts up her hands and retreats.

"Sorry. I'm just watching today. I'm feeling a little under the weather."

Now I remember, didn't the diary mention something about Elinalise being pregnant?

Looking carefully, I do see a bump around her tummy.

I'm a dummy.

"Ah, it'd be awful if I hurt the baby. Please enjoy yourself with Roxy."

"Eh! Baby?"

Cliff shouts in shock and turns around, staring intensely at Elinalise.

"Baby... Y-you got?"

"The curse has stopped, so nine out of ten."

"The curse stopped. Eh? But, how, up till now, we, we never stopped doing it!"

"Never did."

"Whose... Unless, don't tell me, Rudeus?"

"I'm going to get angry, Cliff. Yours truly, since coming back from Begaritto, has been yours and yours alone."

"But but..."

"If you don't believe me, then why don't you find out yourself? See if the Identification Eye can tell."

"Oh, okay."

Thus Cliff removes his eye patch and moves closer to Elinalise.

Almost kissing her, his face lowers near her lower abdomen.

Feels like he's seeing through her uterus.

Still unsure, Cliff slowly raises Elinalise's skirt.

"Kya, Cliff, honestly, not in public..."

"Shh, be quiet."

"Alright alright."

Seeing Cliff so diligent, Elinalise can only shrug.

Honestly though, sticking his head up her skirt... is a little obscene.

Next time, I should try this with Roxy or Sylphy...

Sylphy in a dress.

A perfect fit.

... Wait, I can't be distracted by those thoughts right now.

"... It's true."

Cliff pulls his pale face back out.

Identification Eye can even do that.

Or as the saying goes, [From the skirt comes a pregnant woman.] ^[19]

"W-What? What do we do?"

"Don't do anything."

"B-but, you'll have headaches, right? Ah, for a woman pregnancy and birthing is..."

"Cliff, I been around the block a few times already. Don't worry. Let me handle it. I'll definitely give you a lively child."

"O-oh..."

Cliff looks blue, stunned by this news out of the blue.

"Rudeus, seriously... Did Roxy give it away?"

"... Ah, no, I just thought it might be like that."

"Oh, really? Now that it's done, it can't be helped."

"Okay."

Elinalise leaves with a wave.

Then she sits herself next to Roxy, busy discussing something.

Seeing that Roxy is rubbing her own tummy, they're probably talking about that.

Roxy and Elinalise must have gotten pregnant around the same time.

Oh well, I can't worry about that now.

"Well, let's begin."

Hearing that, Sylphy and Zanoba refocus.

A hour later, the test is over.

Performance wise, the magic armor is capable of maintaining 200 KM/hr.

It can leap a few hundred meters in the air, and even makes impact craters on landing.

Sylphy's magic can't even touch it. Even if it lands it would just bounce back.

Even Zanoba's punches are completely ineffective.

Not just that, he broke his fist and started crying.

Success!

If it can even damage the miko Zanoba, then even Orsted won't go unscathed.

It's unbelievable that I made this without any setback.

No, it would be odd to claim this.

It was all thanks to Zanoba and Cliff.

Still, I wonder if this is how wearing touki feels like in this world.

Overwhelming power.

I can understand why Perugia and Atofe are so full of themselves.

With this magic armor, can I do it?

Yeah.

Probably...

Let's go with that.

Preparations complete.

Part 2

The night of the preparations completion.

Roxy finally made the announcement.

"I think it's about time to say this. I'm pregnant."

Tonight Norn is home too.

Before dinner starts.

While the whole family's here.

"Congratulations!"

The first person to answer is Lilia.

Even though normally she's expressionless, but right now she's wearing a smile.

The first congratulations.

For a moment, I thought she was being considerate for Aisha, but then I have my doubts.

Roxy must have already discussed this with her.

It's easy to guess looking at the better than usual cuisine on the dinner table.

"Congratulations, Roxy."

Sylphy probably has a clue as well.

She accepts this reality with a smile.

Seeing at that smile, I feel something indescribable.

The current scene is different from when Lilia was pregnant.

Obviously, very different.

Zenith and Lilia are both present. Nor was I cheating with Roxy.

Sylphy has accepted Roxy.

Not like when Paul got slapped, nor when Zenith raised hell, nor Lilia in tears.

Pure happiness.

"R-Rudi?"

Roxy becomes uneasy with me so silent, with a delicate voice she turns to me.

My answer is the same.

"From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Roxy."

"Eh? Thank me for what?"

Roxy tilts her head and forces a smile.

But, that expression isn't one of unhappiness.

"Rudi please. You said the same thing when Lucy came, [Thank you.]"

Sylphy says giggling.

That's the case, eh?

But they might be right, why did I thank them?

Em...

"How do I explain this? Telling me when you're pregnant, I feel like that's proof that I have been accepted."

"I have always accepted Rudi... Wah!"

I pick up Roxy and put her on my lap.

Showing affection in front of Sylphy isn't a good idea, but please forgive today as Roxy's Day.

"Sensei taught me many things, helped me many times, and not just now, now has my child... Just thank you alone won't show you my gratitude."

"Rudi hasn't called me Sensei for a long time..."

Roxy rubs her tummy.

Around three months.

I can see a little bump.

The same thought as Sylphy's pregnancy: wow, amazing...

She has my child.

"Rudi is my husband now, and I also want Rudi's child, so I think saying [Good job] or [You did it] would be enough."

"Isn't that a bit bossy?"

"Well, you should spoil me once a while."

"Fine... G-Good job."

"Haha, of course!"

With that, Roxy presses the back of her head against my chest with a little roll.

How calm.

I remember how nervous Sylphy was back then.

Say, Elinalise already knew about Roxy's pregnancy.

By consulting people around her, Roxy has settled down in her own way.

But I was busy.

What I mean is, I feel like I'm not there for her.

Busy, busy, like a father who neglects his family.

... Well, I am a father.

And I'm not even busy making money either.

Thinking that, I hug Roxy tightly, burying myself in her hair.

Roxy's scent smells wonderful as usual.

Calming.

"Nii-san, please don't flirt so much during dinner."

Norn knocks on the table, her face flushing red.

"Once in a while is fine. For Roxy-ane it's service, today only."

The follow up came from Aisha.

Naughtily, she kept her elbows on the table, holding up her face.

A full smile on that face.

"Norn-ane, are you raising a fuss because Onii-chan hasn't been paying attention to you?"

"N-no! Not even. Just that Sylphy-ane and Lucy are present, it would be inappropriate to do as he pleases. What I mean is, they should just get a room."

"Ugh, Onii-chan, I'll tell you later, but recently Norn-ane has been rather popular at school. A few days ago, a boy even dropped off a letter here."

"Aisha! That's not nice, no telling!"

Yes. Norn is popular.

Cute, and a hard worker too, turns out there's a few guys at school with good eyes.

Norn will eventually find a boyfriend, get married, and move out.

When that happens I have no choice but to support her... But I will not allow anyone superficial to touch her..

Norn won't bring someone with dyed hair, earrings, and a teardrop tattooed under his eyes home that says, [Please allow my true love with your sister] right?

If that happens, I'd go crazy...

"Norn, do you have someone you like?"

"S-someone I like?"

Norn turns to hide her face.

"N-no."

She does.

She has reached puberty, and she's at that age, huh.

It's normal.

Even so, to be liked by my Norn, what a lucky bastard.

"Well, if it works out, bring him over to visit."

"I said I don't!"

If she did, I need to vet him thoroughly for Paul's sake.

For Paul, I will tell him [I won't hand my daughter to the likes of you!]

Obviously.

"Also... Aisha, didn't you say you have a good harvest of your rice crop recently? And how happy Nii-san is going to be?"

"Argh! I was going to announce it myself later, Norn-ane is the worst!"

"Ha, that was payback!"

Aisha stands up in panic. Norn stares at her like nothing happened. But I can't just pretend I didn't hear anything.

"Rice harvest from the yard... really?"

"Ah, um. For the time being. Maybe it's the cold, but it wasn't a lot. But if we recrop right now, by Fall..."

"By recrop, you mean you have... rice seeds? There are rice seeds?"

"Em. We do. It tastes a little weird, is that okay Onii-chan..."

"No, that's fine. So next year, and the next year too?"

"O-Onii-chan made soil with magic for me... Onii-chan's soil is the best!"

I gently pick up Roxy, place her back to her position.

Then I get up and follow the table until three steps before Aisha, I kneel with one knee.

With my arms raised, waiting on her like a knight.

"Aisha, you did it!"

"O-oh... Hey, can I, jump?"

Aisha spies at Roxy behind me, slowly walks up, and finally jumps into my open arms.

Then I lift her up, and we spin together.

"Wah! It's Aisha Rice!"

"Wah!"

I can eat rice!

Of course, a trifle compared to Roxy's child, but I really love rice!

Slow cooked, pure white rice.

With a side of well salted grill fish and eat a mouthful.

Those happy meal days will soon be upon us!

With a little exercise, happiness again blossoms inside me.

Roxy has a child.

Will she be Lucy's little sister or brother?

Lucy will be 2 soon.

A mixed blood with Migurd ancestry, will she get bullied?

What color will her hair be?

Lucy will be a good sister.

Norn and Aisha too...

Ah, I can't wait.

And the name... Right, I should decide on a name.

And, and...

All my words are jumbled together.

Part 3

Afterwards, a modest celebration.

Rich meal, lively conversations.

Norn talks about what happened at the Student Council.

Aisha happily reports that the market started to recognize her name and face.

Sylphy busies herself with the crying Lucy.

Lilia quietly serves the food with a smile.

Zenith eats in silence, but also seems to be in a good mood.

Roxy seems a little peeved at how excited I was with Aisha's results, so I have been comforting her.

Also on the menu today, onigiri, looks like Aisha's contribution.

I ask her where she learned this.

She explains that Nanahoshi told her.

That's all Nanahoshi taught her. Her girl power is truly low...

Well, if you put me on the spot, I probably would make onigiri or porridge too.

Aisha's hands are small, so her rice balls are small and round.
Very experimental and unevenly sized.
Regardless, one for everyone, and everyone ate theirs.
Besides me, no one seemed to enjoy theirs, but I thought it was delicious.
Aisha worked hard to make this, worked hard to shape them.
Of course it's delicious.
So delicious that it makes me cry.
With this successful harvest, we will get more next time.
Next time if we got a bigger harvest, then the onigiri can be even bigger!
... But will I be there to taste them?

"I have something to tell everyone."

After dinner.
I take a deep look at everyone.
The sisters look bewildered.

"In a few days, I will fight someone, a very strong opponent."

I didn't say Orsted.

" I think everyone has noticed by now, that in the past two months I have been acting suspiciously. I'm thankful that you haven't pressed me, so I have a free hand to work. I'm very sorry that I can't tell the details."

" ... "

"There's a chance that I might not win."

Everyone becomes rather nervous hearing that.

"So this night, might be my last night sitting here with everyone."

"C-can you choose not to fight?"

Norn says in a panic.

"... No. At least, I don't know."

Afterwards Hitogami did not contact me again.

But he has been keeping me under watch.

"Nii-san, you said you might not win... why... why then?"

"Norn."

She's a mess.

Lilia and Aisha were both home, so they probably know something is up.

They look serious, but no surprise or panic on their faces.

"If I don't come back, my room.."

"Not coming back, why? Don't say that!"

Oh.

Yeah, that's right.

I just want to say a line like cool heroes in those stories, but no point in acting cool right now.

That was too much.

"Well... When I get back, let's take a bath together?"

"... I don't want to, do it yourself."

Haha, this girl.

Well, that's more like Norn.

"Aisha."

"Here."

"If I don't come back, please let Nanahoshi taste the rice balls you made."

"... Onii-chan."

"That person would definitely be brought to tears and do whatever you asked."

"... I, rather than with Nanahoshi, want Onii-chan to spoil me instead."

Aisha murmurs those words with her head down.

Is that so? Aisha is still as playful as always.

When I get back, I will buy her something expensive.

A very expensive backpack, or a giant diamond ring.

"Lilia-san."

"Yes."

"Please take care of my mother."

"... I will, but-"

"But?"

"No matter how long, I will wait for Rudeus-sama to return."

Lilia said calmly.

Even though I knew her the longest, I have never seen her look so shaken.

Aisha is my sister, but Lilia doesn't feel like a mother.

"Mom."

"..."

"I'm going."

"..."

Somehow I imagined a little pain on Zenith's face...

I don't really know.

Maybe one time will come when her emotions return to her.

"Sylphy."

"... I'm here."

"Take care of Lucy."

"Okay. But, Rudi... Em."

"... What is it?"

"No, it's fine."

I feel like Sylphy wants to say something.

But no matter what I can't guess her thoughts.

I like her. But no matter how much I like her, I don't understand her. It makes me uneasy.

Under the table, I grab Sylphy's hands.

Pull her close, and whisper into her ears.

"Hey, Sylphy."

"Oh."

"I hope you won't get angry for what I'm about to say."

"Oh."

"If I come back, seven times in a night."

Sylphy's head drops.

Did I say something wrong?

"Seriously? Rudeus is such a pervert!"

Sylphy punches me on the shoulder.

I grab that hand and drag Sylphy over.

"Ah!"

Somewhat forcefully I kiss her.
Sylphy freezes up, but accepted me anyhow.

Cute as usual.
No matter when she's always so cute.
As expected of Sylphy.
When I am with Sylphy, I feel at home.

"Alright already, Rudi. Everyone's watching.. Eek."

Since I'm here, I licked her ear.
Licking that pointy faerie ear, and delicately bit to leave a mark.

"I'll come back, wait for me."
"Okay, please take care."

Sylphy, face red, can only nod.

Finally, I turn back to Roxy.

"Roxy."
"Oh."
"Tonight... let's sleep together."
"But, the baby in here... that's fine, okay."

Even though a little hesitant, Roxy nods to accept me.

Part 4

That night, after a bath with everyone, Roxy and I head to bed.

Hand in hand, walking intimately to bed.

Last year, every time was full speed ahead, but not today.

"Em, be gentle..."

"No, today's fine."

I put up a hand to stop Roxy from stripping her nightgown.

Roxy grabs the hem of her shirt and tilts her head.

"Anyways, please sit down."

I have Roxy sit on her bed.

I sit on a chair rather than beside her.

"The basic situation, in case that I lose, I want to discuss it with Roxy."

"... Just me? What about Sylphy?"

"..."

"You would tell me and Nanahoshi, but won't tell Sylphy?"

"How did you know that I talked with Nanahoshi about this?"

"Because Sylphy asked me to. She said you probably talked to Nanahoshi...
Rudi, why won't you tell Sylphy?"

"Why is that?"

Why?

I don't know.

But, for some reason, I don't want to tell Sylphy.

It's not because... I don't want her to worry.

Why?

I don't know.

Maybe this too is fate.

"From my point of view, I'm happy that you come to me for help, but I feel bad for Sylphy."

"You're right, then, I'll go call her."

"Okay."

Roxy is so reliable as usual.

Thinking that, I left the room and head to Sylphy's.

I freeze just as I reach for the doorknob.

Say, while I was busy with Roxy, I haven't been watching Sylphy.

Maybe she's crying right now.

She said I can like other girls, and she even forgave me for Roxy.

But looking at Nanahoshi, her jealousy runs deep.

Maybe she's crying.

Maybe she's pricking a voodoo doll with pins.

Maybe she's biting the edge of a handkerchief and crying about that slut.

No, it's fine.

My lovely Sylphy would never do something like that.

Right.

"Hey, Sylphy, I have something I want to--"

"Rudeus bit my ear. My ear! And said seven times a night... Eek... What's going to happen to me? Will I be messed up like our first time... What do I do Lucy, you might have a new sibling soon...!"

Squeaking, the door opens, and before my eyes is Sylphy rolling on her bed, hugging a pillow.

Her legs flopping about, rolling back and forth like an adolescent girl.

Although faint, but with the door open, I heard everything.

She doesn't look like the mother of a child.

But super cute.

So much so that I want to dive right in.

By the way, Lucy isn't here. She's in Lilia's room.

But the room isn't sound proof, so it might get noisy.

No no, Roxy is waiting.

"Ah!"

Our sights met.

Sylphy facing up and suddenly froze.

Like up painting on a wall, in a similar pose, a happy self-satisfied smile.

"..."

I quietly close the door.

No one wants to be seen in their private moments.

"Ah, wait. No, Rudi, wait up, don't leave!"

Rapidly Sylphy got up and sticks her hand between the door.

"No. I'm not leaving. I just thought it might be better if I open the door again."

"Again? Why? What's the matter? Isn't today Roxy's day? Oh, is she feeling sick? Am I at bat?"

Sylphy looks flustered.

There's no reason for Roxy to feel sick today...

How unusual.

No, how usual.

Well, let me settle her down.

"About my opponent this time, and what happens afterwards, I have some things to say. Please come over."

Hearing that, Sylphy stayed silent for a few seconds, and nodded with a serious face.

And perhaps a hint of happiness too?

Somehow I feel a little relaxed as well.

Part 5

The explanation didn't take long.

Those two listen quietly the entire time.

The enemy is Dragon God Orsted.

I talked about the existence of Hitogami, his revelations, and that I have to fight Orsted.

Then, that if I were to die.

That Orsted is the enemy, but never confront him.

Never believe in revelations from the one who calls himself Hitogami.

These two points are to become our family motto.

If I were to die, tell the rest of the family the truth, and protect each other.

Basically in those words.

We start talking sitting up, but somewhere along the way, we end up lying down together.

"And... if I lose. Disaster might await Roxy's child and Lucy." "Disaster... in other words, the one called Hitogami will do something?"

"Yeah."

"I see.. So that's why Rudi has been constantly telling us to protect the family..."

Sylphy nods like she understood something.

Maybe she got lost along the way.

She might just be patronizing me and telling me not to worry.

"I know. But Rudi, I can protect myself, and even if you don't tell me to, I will protect Lucy with my life."

"Me too. I can protect myself. Just like I always had. That won't change in the future. I might be weaker than Rudi, but don't underestimate me."

What? Not even a little discouraged?

Roxy and Sylphy are really great.

"Still, Orsted is one of the Seven Major Powers... A big deal. Do you have a chance?"

"That I don't know. I only fought him once."

"Back then, what happened?"

"I could do nothing."

Just remembering my initial meeting with Orsted makes my knees weak.

Ruijerd was dropped to the ground; Eris was sent flying.

He even shoved his hand straight through my body.

... Terrifying.

"... Rudi. Wouldn't it be better if we all go together?"

"No. I must go alone. Only with that do I have a chance. Hit him with my strongest magic. It will work out somehow."

"Hey... but Rudi, you're shaking?"

"Oh."

"Hey, wait, Rudi quit touching weird places."

I wasn't touching to distract her.

I touched because I want to.

If I die, then I can't touch here anymore.

So I can't touch here, then how about there?

No good. How about here?

No good. How about there?

"... Stop. Really, we're talking about serious stuff right now."

"Oh."

"Hey, recently Lucy started to crawl everywhere. We can never find her."

"Oh."

"Lilia said that reminds her of when Rudeus-sama was born."

"... Soon, she will start talking, and in a year, she'll start to walk."

I haven't taken care of Lucy too much.

I left her all to Lilia and Sylphy.

But, Sylphy.

You really are so cute.

"I can't wait."

"Oh."

"If you're about to lose, please run?"

"Oh, even though I don't know if I can escape, I will do that."

Lucy, you probably don't understand yet.

But if I die, then she won't even remember how her father looks like.

What is she thinking?

If I ask Lucy, will she tell me...

"... Rudi."

From my left a voice.

It's Roxy.

My hand reach for her breasts.

She caught me.

Ow, she's really strong.

Sorry, I'm sorry. Serious topic.

"Well. I thought after meeting Rudi, marrying Rudi, now having Rudi's child, how I'm the happiest girl in the world."

"Right."

"But, because of that... if you die, then I will become the most unfortunate girl."

"... Right."

"Well, this is a little embarrassing to say, but..."

Roxy takes a breath, and finally says.

"Please let me be happy."

Indeed, I'm doing nothing wrong.

Roxy and Sylphy, I fight for them.

Nothing wrong with that.

Fight for the sake of them, come home. That is my decision.

That night, I slept soundly, more than I have for a long time.

A few days passed.

All set to go, I left Magic City Sharia.
Alone.



Chapter 8 - Quagmire vs. Dragon God

Part 1

A full two days north-north-east of the magic city Sharia.

There was a deserted village.

The village was buried in a forest.

The forest expanded due to a calamity 40 years ago that was caused by an abnormality in magical power.

The village was immediately overrun, and those who lived there were forced out of their homes.

Since then, those who visited this forest had essentially only been monsters or adventurers who have business with monsters.

A single man walked toward that village.

He had silver hair and golden pupils.

Wearing a white coat made from some kind of hide, while vigilantly looking around, not riding a horse, just walking.

He walked through the forest in a detached manner while checking the compass in his left hand that he gazed at with sharp dot-like pupils.

No monsters attacked him.

Although their eyes shined from gaps in the deep forest's thickets, whenever the man approached them they would flee like small animals.

"...Here, then."

Looking at the deserted village pointed to by the compass, he halted his footsteps.

"Why a place like this..."

While grumbling that, the man slowly walked into the deserted village.

A place that used to be a road was covered in weeds, and a place that used to be a field had become a forest.

Buildings that used to be houses were pierced by large trees, or turned into masses of green by ivy.

He walked through the village that had been overrun by the forest, but then his feet stopped before a certain place.

It was the center of the village, where there probably used to be a well.

In that place was an obviously suspicious building.

A light brown cylindrical building, and the only one that wasn't surrounded by vegetation.

A stone structure that one couldn't help but think had been constructed recently.

The door looked brand new.

He looked at the compass in his left hand, confirming that where he was heading was that tower.

And then, although somewhat cautiously, he laid his hand on the doorknob.

"...Nanahoshi, are you there?"

The tower's interior was simply made.

There were no windows or corridors.

The floor was slick, painted with something like oil.

Next to the wall had been set incense and a jute bag tightly packed with something.

The source of the strange smell filling the air was probably that incense.

"...What is this place?"

Looking around, he identified another door right in front of him.

He grabbed the doorknob, this time without hesitating.

At that instant, he felt pain as though something had pricked his hand.

"Mu? I wonder if that was just my imagination."

He looked at his hand, confirmed that there was no blood, then went inside.

On the other side of the door was another room with the same layout.

Seeing how the floor slanted, it seemed that the building itself had been constructed underground.

While puzzled by those thoughts, he proceeded toward the interior without being particularly wary.

En route, he became more wary due to the uncanny posters reading [Please take off your footwear here] and [Guests, please put on this hat] and the like, but he ignored them all.

While remaining watchful of occasionally trivial traps set on the doors that seemed intended for mice, he slowly continued inward.

The place he finally arrived at was a strange space.

It was a cylindrical room and an atrium.

The wide open sky in place of a ceiling was roundly cut off.

It felt like being inside a chimney.

"...What is this place?"

He furrowed his brow and confirmed that the compass's point indicated the center of this space.

In the place that was indicated lay a single box.

A single piece of paper had been spread out beneath the box.

He carefully approached it, then looked at the paper.

Letters had been written on the paper.

[Hitogami]

He immediately picked up the box and opened it.

"Mu!"

When he did so, smoke started to pour out of it.

As he dropped the box, now on guard, he heard a metal sound.
Right next to the box, which continued to spew out a incredibly large amount of smoke, a silver ring had fallen to the ground.
It had been in the box and flown out when he dropped the box.
The ring was faintly blinking red, and his compass pointed to it.

"...Nanahoshi?"

As he went to pick up the ring, the following instant.
The sky shined.

"!"

He immediately kicked the ground strongly and tried to dodge.
But the oil-covered floor didn't allow him to do that.
The sole of his foot quickly lost its grip...

A thick bolt of lightning fell toward him--toward Orsted.

---Rudeus's View---

Upon high ground which overlooked the deserted village that Orsted had been lured into.

I lay in wait there, and the instant I saw the smoke rise, I sent a full-powered "Lightning" toward the target site.

It should have hit him.

I practiced over and over again for this day.

I even made sure to cover the floor in canola oil for the sake of him not being able to avoid it immediately before it hit.

But this wasn't the end.

If he could be taken down with this, he wouldn't be called the strongest instead of Atofe and various others.

I stood my staff upon the ground and gathered magical power.

I imagined a giant cloud, a supercell.

The Saint-class water spell "Cumulonimbus".

The sky instantly became covered with dark clouds, as lightning and heavy rain began to fall.

I gathered even more magical power.

I sent magical power into the staff, not trying to oppose the sensation of it being dragged out from the depths of my body.

What I visualized was ice.

Centering on the deserted village, I stopped the movement of every molecule.

I steadfastly lowered the temperature.

[Frost Nova]

I loaded the maximum scope and maximum force into the spell I'd used countless times, and released it.

The downpour of heavy rain steadily became frozen.

The ice layered and stacked up.

Once the ice had become like a mountain, I stopped casting.

The next move.

I loaded magical power into my staff.

I created a rock in the sky above the deserted village.

I focused all my magical power into increasing its size, creating an inescapably large rock, directed its acceleration downward, then fired it.

The rock struck with such a speed as to make one think that its large form had suddenly teleported.

The ground shook.

A little later, a rumbling sound reached my ears.

A little after that, the sudden gust of wind and shock wave reached me.

While holding my arm in front of me to protect my eyes, I gazed at the rock's landing point.

The ice had been smashed, and two thirds of the rock had been buried underground.

If that was a direct hit, I don't think he survived, but...

"...Did I get him?"

I tried saying that.

No reaction.

Could it be over?

That would be nice, but...

The moment after I thought that, the rock broke apart.

"Hiiu!"

An unbelievably terrifying killing intent was sent to my location.

Fear ran through my spine.

My legs trembled, and my eyes watered.

I dived toward the magic armor that I'd set immediately next to me.

I fed magical power to its parts as I'd practiced hundreds of times, set up my posture, and grasped my staff.

I felt the killing intent approaching.

Activation complete.

In order to deal one more blow, I gathered magical power in the staff held in my right hand.

I visualized a nuclear explosion.

With the intention of putting all my magical power into it, I sent magical power from my arm into the staff.

I pointed the staff, yelled out, and shot out the spell, and at the same time held my left hand out in front of me and concentrating magical power into the absorbing magical stones.

The center of the deserted village lit up.

Slightly later, flashes of heat ran across the ground as though they were licking it.

I confirmed out of the corner of my eye that all the trees burst into flames and turned into black shadows.

Slightly later, the explosion came.

But this magic armor that contained my magical power weighed several tons.

I withstood the blast without flinching.

After carefully waiting for the destruction to settle, I lowered my hand.

An enormous mushroom cloud had risen from the center of the deserted village.

I couldn't see the ground well because of the smoke, but I had loaded enough force to blow away everything.

That was probably the highest class of force out of everything I'd ever used.

" ... "

And yet.

And yet, my body wouldn't stop shivering.

The killing intent which had been inevitably drawing closer since earlier hadn't disappeared.

It was drawing near at a fierce speed.

It had been so far away, and now it was already so close.

My teeth were chattering.

I clenched my hand that was shivering with fear, placed my staff in the holder on my back, mounted the Gatling gun on my right arm, and held the shield in my left hand.

"Fuuh... uu... haaa... aah."

I took a deep breath.

My throat trembled.

Forcing down the anxiety and terror that rose from my abdomen, I faced toward the densely rising smoke and prepared my right arm's Gatling gun.

"...Fuu! Fuu!"

That was the first move.

If I ended up losing the initiative, I would definitely lose.

In the first place, did I do any damage?

Was there any effect from the poison set on the door, or the narcotic that was set to burn, or the traps on the way there?

I put in as much power as possible into the four offensive spells I used just now.

If he was completely unhurt by all of that, wouldn't this Gatling gun-like magical tool be unable to scratch him?

No, in the first place, did I even hit him?

There's no way I wouldn't hit him with a spell of such vast scope.

I shot it out with the highest class of force and scope to make sure he wouldn't avoid it.

From a place so far away it couldn't even have been seen by an eye of foresight.

From a place that Orsted wouldn't be able to predict, no matter what magical eye he might have.

<I saw the figure of a person.>

"Take thiiiiiiiiiiiiis!"

While yelling, I activated my right hand's Gatling gun.

The magical power ran through it, generating and firing Stone Cannon bullets at a tremendous rate.

The cannonballs cut through the air, an incessant [Kyuinkyuin] shrieking sound echoing through the surroundings.

The mass of cannonballs with overwhelming speed blew away the clouds of dust.

I caught sight of the silver-haired man with a tattered cape and soot-filled face.

Was there any damage?

None?

There was blood on his chin.

Aren't those burns around the base of his neck?

It's all right. Although it wasn't much, he definitely did take damage.

"!!"

Our eyes met.

The hawk-like sharp glint of his eyes perceived my figure.

The eyes of a hunter who'd discovered his target.

<He began to sidestep in order to avoid the downpour of rock cannonballs.>

I opened my eye of foresight as much as possible and tried to read Orsted's movements.

His movements were fast, seeming blurred as they stacked on top of each other.

I aimed the Gatling gun so as to obstruct him from evading it.

The time lag from firing to impact was essentially non-existent.

Even so, Orsted evaded all of them as though he could see their trajectories, gradually approaching me.

One step, two steps.

Orsted steadily closed the distance while maintaining an expression like that of a bird of prey.

Occasionally he'd grimace as a rock cannonball grazed him, but that was all.

As if to say that even a direct hit wouldn't be fatal. As if to say there was nothing to fear.

As if to say that he always fought against enemies with this level of attack.

That wasn't the case for me.

I felt a shudder toward that zombie-like unsentimental way of fighting.

My heart fractured at the sight of that movement which seemed to tell me that all of my attacks were futile.

But for now, I still had the advantage.

While telling myself that, I stepped in order to match him.

If Orsted came from the right, I'd move back and to the left.

If he came from the left, I'd move back and to the right.

If he came from the front, I'd load onto him with the Gatling gun.

If he fell back, I'd load onto him with the Gatling gun.

That way he'd never be able to close the distance between us.

The fight would continue with me in a position of complete advantage.

Just as I'd simulated it.

In order to further corner him, I cast magic with my left hand.

My aim was beneath my and Orsted's feet.

The spell was Quagmire.

The moment I raised my hand to activate the technique after having immediately completed it.

Orsted raised his left hand toward me.

"Disturb Magic!"

The magical power I'd finalized was stirred up by his magical power.

He was trying to transform meaningful magical power into meaningless dregs of magical power.

"Kuh!"

I forcibly used the technique formula for Quagmire.

That was possible for me.

I'd been doing it for a long time.

While teaching Sylphy Disturb Magic, I would practice trying to counteract that by completing the technique.

I might have been doing that all for this day, this time, this moment.

Orsted's eyes opened wide.

Looks like it was the first time somebody checked his Disturb Magic... Uoh.

The instant it became muddy at Orsted's feet.

He activated magic in order to coat it.

The portion that had been mud was covered in a plate of earth.

And then he moved his right hand toward me.

As I instinctively began to use Disturb Magic on his right hand...

<My vision was covered in light.>

I shuddered.

I stopped the Gatling gun and took a huge leap to the side.

My field of vision was filled with scenery that wasn't light.

The ground in front of where Orsted had pointed his hand had sunk greatly inward.

I didn't see what kind of spell it was.

Fire?

Maybe some other kind. Could it be gravity?

Was what I saw just now not light, but... death?

I didn't have any time to think about it.

Orsted ran toward me with his hand out.

Disturb Magic doesn't work.

He can negate Disturb Magic too.

I activate my left hand and right hand at the same time.

While restricting his movements with the Gatling gun, I would use the absorbing magical stones to negate his magic.

I held both of them toward him with that intention...

I realized my mistake.

Orsted's magic disappeared.

But at the same time, the barrage of rock cannonballs heading toward Orsted also lost their effect, turning to sand and disappearing.

Orsted closed in.

Still directing his right hand toward me, with his left hand held at his waist defensively, he swung it down aiming at my heart.

"...!"

My instincts had me choose to evade with all my power.

Attempting to escape to directly behind me, I used both feet attempting to leap backward, but...

I didn't make it in time.

Orsted's fist struck my chest area.

The sound of metal coincided with Orsted disappearing from my vision at a terrifying speed.

I heard a [Hagyan] sound from behind me as tree after tree passed by through the corners of my eyes.

(Aah, so this is the sensation of being blown away.)

The moment I thought that, I struck a large tree and stopped being blown away.

At the same time, my full body received the full g-force^[20], giving me pain as though my internal organs were being torn off.

My vision went black for a moment, but it recovered right away.

The magic circles that Cliff had inserted into the magic armor instantly healed my body.

But when I looked at my chest.

The chest plate was dented and cracked.

The crack was being steadily mended, but slowly.

In any case, I withstood a single blow.

I'm so glad that I made that part of the armor particularly thick.

The killing intent followed me.

He chased straight after me and arrived in front of me.

I activated the Gatling gun.

I pointed it toward Orsted and let out a barrage.

But Orsted once again brought his right hand toward me.

No good, at this rate it'll be a repeat of what just happened.

The armor is in this state from one hit.

If it's hit over and over, the armor will eventually be pierced.

What should I do?

Magic doesn't work.

Even if I block Disturb Magic, Orsted has a technique to resist it just like Moore.

In contrast, I have no idea what magic Orsted is using.

Could I be at a disadvantage in a long distance battle?

In that case, I'll go forward.

I'll believe in the power of the magic armor, and hit him hard.

"Uoooooooo!"

"Nu!"

I charged at him with a yell while shooting out a barrage with the Gatling gun.

Orsted brought back his right hand in defense.

I moved both legs.

I brandished the shield in my left hand and rammed him with the weight of my entire body.

<Orsted assumed a Water God Style defense.>

The instant my eye of foresight grasped that, I pointed the sharp end of my shield at Orsted.

In order to stab Orsted with the sword whose force increases exponentially proportional to the strength of the enemy's defense.

Our bodies clashed.

The heavy sound of metal rang.

I felt the lingering sense of having struck something very heavy, as Orsted blew backward.

Orsted's arm scattered blood in midair as he gazed at me like he'd discerned something annoying.

I can do this.

I immediately set up the Gatling gun, pointed it, and fired.

A tremendous number of rock cannonballs flew out, hitting Orsted in midair.

His clothes were shredded, and below them was a body full of wounds.
There were burn-like scars, cuts, and scratches.
They received the rock cannonballs, and fresh blood scattered.

Orsted made a huge sound and fell to the ground.

I can do this.

He'll be killed.

If the rock cannonballs land a direct hit, he takes proper damage.

His skin repels them, but it breaks and blood comes out.

In which case, he'll eventually die.

Right now, if I deal as much damage to him as possible...

"...No other choice, huh."

Amid the sound of the rock cannonballs cutting through the air, I heard that voice.

In an instant.

The atmosphere changed.

A chill ran through my body which made me feel like it had become winter instantly.

At the same time, my eye of foresight lost track of Orsted.

My other eye was able to see him.

Just what...

Orsted disappeared from my other eye, too.

"Iih!"

Feeling an indescribable terror, I tried to twist my body and jump to my right.

I heard a sound from my left arm.

When I turned to face it, Orsted was there.

He was there, swinging a katana-like^[21] sword.

And then, the left arm of the magic armor made a large noise as it fell to the earth, displaying the cleanly amputated surface.

Part 2

"Gaaaaaaaaaooooaaaaa!"

Orsted let out a roar.

At the resounding yell like an electric shock, my body became numb as though paralyzed.

Voice magic.

A magic particular to the beast races.

In that instant, it seemed like I'd lose consciousness.

But I barely endured it, and jumped to the side.

While indenting the ground, Orsted broke into a rush.

The moment I aimed the Gatling gun and tried to activate it, Orsted swung his sword.

It was cut to pieces and fell to the ground.

I still have my right arm.

There's a slash mark on the armor plate, but he can't cut it from that distance.

Orsted is right in front of me.

His posture is still that of having slashed.

I concentrated magical power into my fist.

Holding nothing back.

I drove my fist toward Orsted's face while firing "Electric".

I felt a wet slipping sensation.

When I looked, I saw that Orsted's sword was lodged in my arm.
He had deflected it.

Both my fist and the electric shock inside my fist.

Behind Orsted, purple lightning licked the forest.

A large tree split and burst into flames with a great sound.

Orsted's arm, and the sword lodged in my arm, moved slightly.

"Uaaaah!?"

The armor's right arm, along with my arm inside of it, was cut short.

I felt sharp pain.

But with no time to grimace at the pain.

Orsted pressed toward me, swinging his sword.

I had no time to consider what I should do next.

He landed a kick into my stomach.

Alongside an unpleasant noise, my body floated for an instant.

The impact was delivered completely internally.

"Boeeh!"

I spat out gastric juice at the shock which seemed to rupture my stomach.

My view was blurred with tears.

While falling on my backside, I turned my broken off right arm toward Orsted and fired off a shock wave.

Orsted slashed upward.

I heard a loud sound and nothing more.

By the time I realize that the shock wave had been cut apart, a kick had landed in my face.

Pain ran from my neck to my shoulder.

"...!?"

I suddenly noticed that I'd fallen down.

When I straightened up and tried to stand in a state of panic, Orsted was right in front of me brandishing his sword.

I'm going to die.

"Purge!"

I yelled without thinking.

At the same time, the back plate popped off, and I was ejected from the magic armor as if pulled.

An instant later, the magic armor was cut in half.

I struck the ground and rolled roughly.

I can't see him move.

I can't do anything.

I can't follow Orsted's movements.

"Gaha... geho..."

My entire body hurt.

Even though I'd only been struck through the armor a few times, pain ran through my body as if my entire body had been struck.

My chest hurt, my stomach hurt, my right arm hurt, my neck hurt, my back hurt.

It was difficult to breathe.

It felt like my body couldn't move well.

An incredible exhaustion.

Huh?

Could it be that I've... run out of magical power?

"Aah... haah..."

Orsted's eyes were directed toward me.

I shuddered.

I don't have the armor anymore.

I need to escape.

Or I'll be killed.

Before that, my right hand, where's my right hand.

"Goheh!"

Before I knew it, I'd been kicked flying.

Pain assaulted each part of my body.

Face up, my chest was stomped on.

"Uguh..."

A groan leaked from my throat.

Something cold was pressed against the hot nape of my neck.

I saw that Orsted had thrust his sword before me.

Am I going to die?

I couldn't win after all.

I'm going to die.

"I was wondering who it was. So it was you, Rudeus Greyrat. I heard that you were living peacefully, so why did you go after my life?"

It looks like Orsted isn't going to kill me right away.

Maybe because he spared my life once.

Maybe because I've already lost the ability to fight.

Well, whatever.

"Hitogami said..."

"...Hmph, so you really were Hitogami's apostle. Die."

Orsted took his foot off my chest, and held up his sword.

"He said you'll destroy the world, and my descendants will help you kill him."

"...What did you say?"

Orsted stopped moving.

"Hitogami said to fight you to stop you from destroying the world."

"..."

"He said that's why, if I kill you, he'll overlook my kids, my family..."

Lying face up, I clung to Orsted's legs.

And then rubbed my head against them, and cried out my words.

This is the only thing left that I can do.

"I'm begging you. Please don't destroy the world. It's fine to kill me. Don't take away my kids, my future. I'm begging you. This is the first time. The first time I've been so happy. I'm begging you. Give up on Hitogami. I'm begging you."

I cried.

I'm powerless and pathetic.

Uncool.

What am I doing.

Shit.

"...I can't do that."

The instant I heard that, I bit Orsted's leg.

"Fuguuuuuaaa!"

Still biting, I lifted my right arm that was spurting out blood, loaded all of my remaining magical power into my fistless arm, and let it all explode at once. With the intention of killing him even if it killed me too.

"Disturb Magic!"

I was kicked away, lost my concentration, and my magical power dispersed. My awareness became distant.

The next time I used magical power, I would definitely faint.

"Even if you possess an element of Laplace and have vast magical power, if you keep using large spells like that one after another, you'll still run out of magical power."

Orsted extended his hand.

I'll going to be killed.

I'll be killed.

If I'm killed, Orsted won't die.

If Orsted doesn't die, Lucy will...

Roxy will... Sylphy will...

They won't die.

I won't lose.

I need to win no matter what.

But my body won't move.

I have no magical power.

Blood is pouring out of my arm.

My consciousness is dim.

My vision is dark.

Orsted's hand covered my view.

Ah, ah, aah.

Aah...

I should have at least decided on a name.

Part 3

"Mu!?"

Orsted jumped aside.

"...?"

Before I knew it.

A single human was standing there, as if to separate me and Orsted.

She was a tall woman.

She wore dark clothes and a stylish coat.

In her hands was a single-edged sword with a seemingly transparent blade.

I was looking at her from behind, so I couldn't see her face.

Aah, but I know that hair.

That wavy hair long enough to reach her waist.

Deep crimson hair, as if someone had thrown unmixed paint on it.

"Looks like I kept you waiting, Rudeus."

Eris Greyrat stood there.

Chapter 9 - Mad Sword King vs. Dragon God

Part 1

Explaining why Eris Greyrat appeared before Orsted isn't difficult.

A few days ago.

2 females arrived at the entrance of magic city Sharia.

A female of the Beast Race with grey hair.

A female of the Human Race with majestic red hair.

The female of the Beast Race was one head taller.

Wearing similar tunics, both of them had swords hanging from their waists.

Eris Greyrat and Ghyslaine Dedorudia.

They have finally arrived at their destination after a long journey.

The journey wasn't easy.

In order to meet with Rudeus as fast possible, they chose a shortcut through the forest and got lost.

While lost they stumbled deep inside a goblin nest and ended up fighting.

When they finally exited the forest and entered a nearby city, they got into an argument with hoodlums.

As a result, a large number of enemies appeared ensuing into a brawl.

And so, they lost time fighting while leaving the city.

As a consequence of constantly getting involved in battles, even though they managed to get to Sharia, it took considerable time.

In any case, both of them are adventurers.

Along the way, they gradually regained their bearings. Once they entered Ranoa kingdom, the journey went smoothly and they finally arrived at Magic City Sharia.

Inside Magic City Sharia, everything went smoothly as well.

When they went to the adventurer's guild to gather information, there were a lot of people who knew where Rudeus lived.

In this city, almost everyone knew the name of Rudeus Greyrat.

They were told that, a rare magical beast from the Begaritto continent and a suspicious Treant cultivated from the Magic continent could be seen from the gates, so it was easy to recognize.

Their destination was easily located.

If you compare the Rudeus estate to Eris's former home there is a world of difference but, it is still large enough to pass as an inn.

The garden was so big that you could even use it as a training area.

While conversing with Ghyslaine, in a rare case for Eris she hesitated to go inside.

She silently stood still for awhile in front of the gates.

Imposingly she stood still before it.

Raising her chin, she silently looked up at the house.

As if by doing so, Rudeus would notice her and come out.

What was inside Eris's mind were the rumors she heard about Rudeus while travelling.

Rudeus Greyrat the Quagmire.

Defeated a stray dragon, repelling a demon king, holding the title of strongest in the magic university. Feared by those around him and displaying an overbearing attitude, he was still an ally of the weak. Along with comical rumors that continued on and on, it looks like he was a magician that wasn't hated.

A strength that couldn't be described with words, delighting Eris each time she hears it as if it was about herself.

In all the rumors about him, what caught Eris's attention most was not related to Rudeus's strength.

It was the comical parts.

For example; "Rudeus was a devoted husband, returning from school, he would go shopping with his wife."

or "While shopping, he will start caressing his wife's butt and get scolded."

or "He married a girl who looks like a child."

or "He married twice, a disgrace to all Milis believers."

In other words, it's the rumors about Rudeus's wives.

Each time Eris remembers it, her eyebrows would meet and a deep wrinkle would form on her forehead.

Around the time she entered Ranoa kingdom, she also found the names of the two wives.

Sylphiette Greyrat and Roxy M. Greyrat.

When the time comes to meet those two, Eris doesn't know what to do.

She learned about them from the letter, and heard rumors about them while travelling. She had thought about several things during the journey but, when the time comes to talk, she didn't know if the conversation will go accordingly.

To the Eris who stood still in front of the gate.

The one who called out to her was a single maid, Aisha.

At the time Eris appeared in front of the gate; [Is that Eris? You're Eris, right?]

While answering her own question, she was already prepared to immediately respond when Eris knocked on the gates.

However, after waiting for nearly one hour, in order to save Eris the effort, she moved instead.

For Aisha, Eris was her benefactor.

Although there was none she respected as much as her brother Rudeus, Eris was definitely part of the group that saved her in Shirone Kingdom.

A debt of gratitude should be repaid, is something her mother taught her.

At the time she heard the conversation of the three, she privately thought that if Eris loved her brother, she would support her.

With Aisha's lead, Eris quietly went inside.

She was warmly received by both Aisha and Lilia. While Aisha went out to call Sylphy and Roxy, she heard about Rudeus's situation from Lilia.

Lucy, who is Rudeus's daughter.

While looking at her Eris wore a complex facial expression, but realized no unpleasant feelings occurred.

If it's children she can also give birth. A boy if possible.

She was able to have such composure because of Aisha and Lilia's support.

After Sylphy and Roxy returned along with Norn, the meeting went calmly.

While Rudeus's two wives shuddered at the sight of Eris's well-bred breasts and butt, they displayed no signs of lunging at Eris.

It was thanks to the mood that Aisha and Lilia created, but in the first place, with Rudeus gone there were a lot of things to talk about.

Norn also had an unsympathetic attitude but she soon joined the conversation and didn't show any antagonism.

Both understood that Rudeus planned to accept her and intended to respect that.

As Eris started speaking, her love and respect for Rudeus was such that, even with a bitter smile the mood was still pleasant.

Having someone they loved to be praised and admired, anyone would be happy.

However, it was only calm at the beginning.

When Eris asked, [And so, where's Rudeus?] the atmosphere changed.

He went to kill Orsted.

Hearing their response, Eris blamed them, [Why did you let him go alone? Do you want to kill him?]

If you're both living with Rudeus, then you should have gone and fought with him.

Towards the adamant Eris, Sylphy replied while crying, [We wanted to but he told us not to follow since we would just be a burden.]

While Eris was shocked at her tears, thinking deeply she remembered how she trained in order not to be a burden.

And so, with no one helping Rudeus while she was gone, having a letter written to her, towards the women in front of her she felt, together with a small amount of jealousy, a feeling of superiority. ^[22]

Part 2

And so Eris is here.

Hurrying to her destination, almost passing by, then turning back after seeing a huge explosion. Hearing the sounds of a battle she searched, and searched, and continued to search in a frenzy.

After finding Rudeus on the verge of death she jumped.

Right in front of Orsted.

Eris confronted Orsted, raising one of the Sword God's seven swords [Phoenix Elegant Dragon Sword]^[23] above her head.

"Ghyslaine, I'll leave the rear to you!"

Orsted wasn't in a fighting stance.

He only looked at Eris with a dubious face.

No, he was looking at what was behind her.

Reflected in his eyes were two females who were rushing towards the collapsed Rudeus.

Eris carefully observed Orsted while looking at his eyes.

The upper half of his body was laid bare, with blood everywhere.

Blood was flowing down his head, and his entire body was listless.

The tips of his hair were burned, and there were bruises around his shoulders.

The damage had piled up.

He was still holding a curved sword in his right hand.

She had never seen such a sword before. She didn't think she had discernment for swords, but she understood that it fit him.

Even compared to the Sword God's cherished sword, it was hiding a dreadful energy.

During their past meeting, he didn't use such a sword.

He didn't need to use it and won with just bare hands.

For Rudeus to damage him this far, even forcing him to use that sword, an indescribable feeling permeated her.

("Like Rudeus I'll... but, I shouldn't hurry. First I need to buy some time...")

Eris told herself.

She couldn't defeat Orsted alone.

She realized that the moment she confronted him.

She naturally understood.

In the past, she wouldn't have recognized it as beyond her.

Simply looking up a tower a hundred times higher than her, crudely thinking it was just tall.

Believing that it was climbable.

But now she was different.

She recognized the gap between Orsted and her.

Even so Orsted was high, very high.

At a height high enough to dazzle.

So high to the point it's impossible for Eris to climb.

"Eris Boreas Greyrat, huh? Is he that important to you? Someone who isn't Luke."

".....Luke?"

"The man fated to become your husband."

"I don't know anything about that."

Eris ignored Orsted's words.

She didn't know anyone called Luke.

The only one important to her is Rudeus.

Rudeus, just that one person.

She doesn't need anyone else.

"It seems so."

Orsted didn't take a fighting stance.

He observed Rudeus who is being healed.

His stance is full of openings.

Eris understood.

He was showing a lot of openings.

On purpose.

While doing so, he was waiting for Eris to move.

" ... "

Eris was reminded of her last meeting with the Sword God.

Part 3

Sword God Gull Farion invited Eris to his room, lined up three swords and said,

"Which do you want?"

Eris tried them one by one.

Before, she would have said the sword she received from the magic continent was enough. As her body grew, however, the sword no longer fit her body and she started wanting a longer sword.

Moreover, that sword would probably not be effective against Orsted.

[Relying on swords, you don't have enough pride as a swordsman], is something a master swordsman would probably say.

However, Eris knew.

Just having pride is worthless.

"This one."

What Eris chose was the most simple sword.

A thin and slightly curved single-edged blade.

A sword that didn't release any sinister feeling and just felt refreshing.

"Phoenix Elegant Dragon Sword, huh?"

This is definitely the sword that the skilled craftsman Dragon Emperor bestowed upon the first generation Sword God; Phoenix Elegant Dragon Sword.

Able to push the Sword God's techniques to the limit. A sword for a Sword God.

"That's a good choice."

"Tell me the reason."

"That sword is cursed. It doesn't seem special at first glance, but magical power has been tempered into the blade, and you can nullify your opponent's Touki [Fighting Spirit] defense."

"The Dragon God's fighting spirit has a defense so strong it can't be nullified, but you can weaken it."

Defense Nullification.

That is the ability that Phoenix Elegant Dragon Sword possesses.

"It didn't fit me, but you can probably master it."

Of the seven swords, one is with the Sword God. The two Sword Emperors each have one. Finally, the Sword King Ghyslaine holds another. The remaining 2 swords will be given to master swordsmen when they grow a little more into adulthood.

"Now then, to the main problem. First, your tactic against Orsted..."

The Sword God's forewarning.

"Don't ever move first."

There was no need to ask why.

Eris also knew the reason.

"He has reached god-rank in the Water God style. His counterattack will surely kill you."

What came to mind was her past self.

She was blown away with one hit, an unpleasant memory.

"That's the first phase."

Part 4

The Sword God style always takes the initiative.

Do the reverse.

The Sword God told her a simple strategy against Orsted.

And so, Eris chose not to attack.

The Water God style would definitely wait and show no aggression.

The aggressive Sword God, and the defensive Water God.

Their affinity is the worst.

The Water God style's counterattack will not fail.

As long as there is no difference in ability, the Water God style will win.

Eris has experienced it with her body.

By training with Water King Isolte.

Therefore Eris chose not to attack first.

For the girl labeled as the Mad Dog, who has always been aggressive, that was a bitter experience.

"Nnn... You're not going to approach?"

Just bracing herself and showing no signs of aggression, Orsted was puzzled at the scene.

The Sword God style would definitely attack first, that was the basics of their technique.

"I'm fine with waiting. I'll attack together with Rudeus."

Eris quietly replied.

"... That's surprising. Eris Boreas Greyrat will fight together with her companions. Is this also a part of your madness? Certainly, if Eris Boreas Greyrat held a little more judgement, if she were to study under a suitable master, I see... So this is what happens?"

"I'm no longer a part of Boreas. It's just Eris Greyrat."

"The Eris I know, is a different person, is she..."

While speaking, Orsted slowly adjusted himself.

Easing down his left hand, he slowly raised his right and pointed the tip of his sword at Eris.

"Well then, let me start off."

With both of them doing nothing, the fight has entered the second phase.

Part 5

Eris once again remembered her conversation with the Sword God.

"Shaping his fist like a sword, he can release a Sword of Light. In order to deal with the Sword of Light, you've sparred with Nina several times right? He won't be faster than you using his wrists, aim at it and chop it off.^[24]"

However, left or right, which one will he release it from? If he readies both hands, which one will you gamble on? Will it come from above? or below? This is the second phase"

The Sword God definitely said that.

Eris grimaced.

Orsted already drew his sword.

He was no longer using his fist as a substitute.

He'll be using a complete Sword of Light.

Eris wonders if she can still cope with that.

She assumes positively.

Orsted isn't perfect.

His breathing is slightly rough, and his body is full of wounds.

Blood is flowing from his sword hand.

Furthermore, Orsted has only readied his right hand.

As planned, from below.

Even though he's injured, he's just using one hand.

(He's looking down on me...)

Usually, Eris would be enraged by it, but strangely she's calm.
She never thought a day would come when she'd think being underestimated is convenient.

<Sword God style hidden technique; Sword of Light>

At the same time Orsted moved his hand with frightening speed.

<Sword God style hidden technique; Light Reversal>

Eris swung her sword.

In a single pattern that she repeated over a thousand times.

A method to counter the sword of light.

In a situation where you couldn't be the fastest, countering with a bisecting action.

Orsted's severed hand and sword separated and whirled in midair.

("I did it!")

Eris thought.

However, in the next moment, Orsted performed a surprising action.

With his left hand, he caught the severed limb and immediately reattached it.

At the same time, he made use of his upper body and performed a roundhouse kick.

Eris was able to evade this attack.

She was told by the Sword God that it would probably turn out this way.

"...u!"

Retreating half a step backwards after evading, she was pursued by a handword^[25] which she knocked away with her blade.

They weren't used as a Sword of Light.

As a result, Eris's slash couldn't injure Orsted.

With a clang, the handword was deflected and Orsted stood there uninjured.

A bit later, Orsted's sword dropped with a woosh and pierced the ground behind him.

Looking at Orsted, his hand that should have been severed has finished healing.

Similarly, the damage Rudeus gave him has been completely healed.

Healing Magic.

In the course of that brief exchange, Orsted used healing magic.

And in an instant, everything was healed.

("A monster...")

Eris deemed silently.

That slash she had used right now wasn't a sword of light, but it had considerable speed and power.

And yet it was repelled.

Besides the sword of light, there was nothing that could smash Orsted's, the Dragon God's, Holy Dragon Fighting Spirit.

Even if the sword is the Phoenix Elegant Dragon Sword.

"This fighting method, was it suggested by the Sword God? You're cherished, Eris Greyrat."

Eris returned her sword to an overhead position.

She sharpened her mind and calmed herself.

The ensuing words were spoken loudly.

"Did you train inside Gull Farion's bedroom? "

Towards the three people behind her.

No, he spoke loud enough for Rudeus to hear.

In words that could be easily misunderstood.

Usually, those were words Eris couldn't forgive.

No matter what Eris says, she respected the Sword God.

In the past few years, the one who trained Eris to the brink of death was Gull Farion.

He entrusted his dream to her.

Their relationship wasn't that of a man and a woman.

But of a master and his student.

A teacher and a student with a similar objective.

But.

But.

That master also told her.

[If the fight goes smoothly, sooner or later Orsted will probably start provoking you. Will you let him?]

The Sword God expected provocations to occur.

And so she wasn't disturbed.

She will not get angry about anything.

Right now, Orsted was inside Sword God Gull Farion's palm.

"Hnnn"

".... Oh. You've truly grown strong, haven't you?"

Orsted murmured lonesomely.

He adjusted the shape of both his hands into swords.

Seeing that, Eris remembered the final words of the Sword God.

[That person, for some reason won't fight seriously.

Even though he knows sword techniques and magic, he'll limit himself to just fighting spirit and barehanded techniques whenever possible.

Especially when he knows his opponents skills. Fighting spirit and barehanded techniques, if these aren't enough he'll use magic.

He'll try to win as efficiently as possible, but in unfamiliar situations...

Seeing a technique for the first time, he will try to study it. That is probably his weak point.]

Eris visualized the first time Orsted and Rudeus fought.

As if tormenting a weak mouse. The childish actions of Orsted.

He didn't finish him off, and just toyed with him.

[Gri]

While Eris grinded her teeth, she removed her left hand from the Phoenix Elegant Dragon sword. Her aim is the beloved and inscription-less sword she received from a town in the Magic continent, placed on the left side of her waist.

The Phoenix Elegant Dragon sword raised overhead with just her right hand; the inscription-less sword still stored in its scabbard.

An irregular two sword style.

But the Sword God style didn't have any dual wielding techniques.

Only the North God style had a dual wielding pattern.

Still not enough.

It's still not enough. No matter how strongly the Phoenix Elegant Dragon sword is cursed.

She couldn't release a sword of light with just one hand.

Even with Sword Draw techniques, she can't perform an IAIGIRI with a reverse grip.^[26]

A futile posture.

A futile action.

This isn't a posture a Sword King who mastered the Sword God style should have taken.

"Mu..."

And that's exactly why Orsted's movement stopped.

With his handswords at the ready, he observed Eris.

His eyes no longer reflected Rudeus who was receiving healing magic.

He was only looking at Eris.

However, he won't just let time pass by.

If Eris doesn't start doing anything, Orsted will start attacking.

For such a situation, with the intent to deceive, Eris practiced a single technique.

The North God style's technique which she learned from the North Emperor, Auber.

A technique which she only witnessed once.

Eris trained to draw a sword from the scabbard with one hand as fast as possible.

It was incomplete but, it was a technique that can be relied upon to steal a person's life.

(A cornered North God Style practitioner will throw his sword.)

Though it was rough, Eris moved her left hand in a direct path.

Hooking her finger to the sword guard, she unsheathed it, and threw it while aiming at Orsted.

The sword that spent a long time and experienced countless trials with Eris, with its tip pointing at Orsted, soared towards him.

Eris's left hand, without slowing its throwing momentum, continued to the sword she held in a overhead position.

As fast as she could, she moved her left hand towards Phoenix Elegant Dragon sword.

Upon reaching it, the sword was held with two hands and she instantly released a sword of light.

"!"

The sword of light that was released using the force of her whole body, overtook the nameless sword she threw away in mid-air. And then, travelling the shortest distance at the fastest speed possible, it should have drilled into Orsted's forehead.

A clinking sound could be heard.

"...tch"

Having released a longsword of light, Eris clicked her tongue without re-positioning herself.

Orsted deflected her sword.

The sword she had thrown seriously.

Even though the nameless sword hit Orsted's body, his holy dragon fighting spirit repelled it, and sent it rebounding far behind Eris's back.

"Better than expected. But, is this all you have?"

"No."

Before the nameless sword could fall down,

Before Eris could look behind her,

Rudeus was already standing.

He has already finished healing.

"We're just starting!"

Eris turned around, his figure reflected in her eyes.

Rudeus.

Rudeus is there.

His lower eyelids have turned completely black.

His bright brown hair looked white.^[27]

With legs that trembled,

a pale face, violet lips,

and looking like he could die at any moment, he stood up while being supported by Sylphy and Roxy.

"....."

"What do you mean, just starting?"

Even as a compliment, Rudeus was in no state to fight.

His magic power has been depleted, his strength already left him, even his willpower was gone.

He was ragged all over his body.

"I meant exactly what I said."

Seeing that, Eris made her resolve.

Part 6

"Take Rudeus and escape!"

Eris called out.

"I'll stop Orsted even if it costs me my life!"

That resolve was comprehended by Sylphy.

She already witnessed something similar.
Once before, Ariel's travelling companion had the same resolve.
A resolve with no regard for one's own life.

"I.. I'll help!"

Sylphy shouted.
Her legs were trembling.
Ever since the first time she laid her eyes on Orsted.
In front of an existence that can be called a symbol of terror.
She was prepared to die.
For the sake of protecting Rudeus, deciding wasn't hard at all.
Even more scary than Orsted, was the regret of no longer being able to see
the one she loved.

[Do you want to kill Rudeus?] Eris's words from the time in Sharia still
lingered in her ears.

She didn't have that intent.
Even though Rudeus was worrying, it was the same as always. She thought
it was fine.
Rudeus will return as always. He had power that was beyond imagination.
Even his magic armor held an amazing power.
She didn't think an opponent that could win against that would exist.
That she was mistaken was something Sylphy never even thought about.

".....!"

Eris looked at Sylphy, saw the resolve in her eyes, and then nodded.

".... then, I'll be relying on you to guard my back! Ghyslaine! Escort Rudeus
and Roxy away from here!"

"Eris! Protecting you is my duty!"

The one who refused those words, was the Sword King of the Beast Race.
She had seen Eris's struggle.

She had seen Eris's effort.

That's why she didn't say or do anything and just watched.

For Eris's grandfather who had died...

She believed it was her duty, and payment for the debt of honor she owed Sauros.

"Are you listening?! I'm telling you to protect the most important person to me!"

"... I won't! If you die, I won't be able to face Master Sauros and Master Philip!"

She couldn't permit her dying an untimely death.

She will not let her die needlessly.

.... Ghyslaine hasn't thought that far yet. In any case, she replied reflexively.

"... right now, we should run!"

Roxy understood that fighting with a pregnant body is too much for her.

Even though she followed this far, she knew she would just be a hindrance when it came to a fight.

And so, she sought to drag Rudeus outside the forest where horses waited and then run away at full speed.

Even if she had a miscarriage, as long as Rudeus escaped.

She didn't think of what would happen after. Right now, she believed running away was the priority.

Seeing Eris's and Ghyslaine's argument.

Seeing Sylphy's and Roxy's determination.

"..... fuu"

Orsted breathed out a protracted sigh.
Towards that sigh, everyone except Rudeus reacted.
Orsted didn't ignore what he saw.
In a loud voice, he spoke.

"Rudeus Greyrat!"

Rudeus's body trembled with a start.

"As long as you're allied to the Human God, I will not let you escape! Even if I have to kill everyone here! Even if I have to murder each and every person inside the city! I will hunt you down and kill you!"

Rudeus's trembling became even more severe.
With his legs trembling, he pointed his gaze at his feet.

"I don't believe in anything the Human God would say but... if what the Human God told you is true, then after killing you, I will kidnap your children!"

With those words, Rudeus's body stopped trembling.
His eyes burned with renewed vigor.
He slapped his left hand onto his trembling leg and reached for Roxy's staff with his right hand as if to steal it.
Without realizing it, his hands failed him, and he began to lose his balance.
While a panicked Roxy supported him, he glared at Orsted.
With bloodthirsty eyes.

"However, with your armor that imitates the Fighting God, and with magical power that's comparable to Laplace, along with a constitution that is immune to my curse, you are somebody who is useful!"

"...?"

At Orsted's words, Rudeus's bloodlust decreased.

Towards a puzzled Rudeus, Orsted continued.

"Betray the Human God, and join me!"

Two people immediately responded to his words.

"That's just dumb!"

"Rudi, don't!"

Eris and Sylphy were convinced he was telling a lie.

They didn't have a basis.

But they were still confident.

Ghyslaine and Roxy remained silent, however they started to search for any hidden intent in Orsted's words.

"If you do, I'll forget about this ambush of yours, and I'll heal your injured arm!"

"....."

However, Rudeus was different.

He realized there was something in Orsted's voice.

He realized that his inner throat trembled.

"If you have my.... the Dragon God's divine protection, the Human God shouldn't be able to easily lay his hands on you."

Inside Rudeus's eyes were, doubt and hesitation.

"Right now, even this conversation, will not reach him!"

"....."

"If you unwillingly followed the Human God, this shouldn't be a bad deal for you!"

"....."

"Choose! Rudeus Greyrat! Side with the Human God, and lose everything to me! or follow me, and fight the Human God together! If it's you, since it's you who is immune to my curse, then you should be able to choose with your own will!"^[28]

Rudeus and Orsted stared at each other.

Rudeus slowly exhaled.

As if trying to confirm something, he stared at the other's face.

Trying to find the truth under his facial expression.

Of course, there's no reason Rudeus could see such a thing, and several seconds passed.

"Rudi?"

While stumbling, Rudeus let go of Roxy's hand.

Looking like he could fall over any moment, he walked slowly and clung to Ghyslaine's shoulder, staggering towards Sylphy he clung to her, finally arriving on Eris's side.

He dropped down in front of Orsted.

While on both knees, he raised his face towards him.

"Is it true, a method to protect my family from the Human God, exists.....?"

"There is! His ability to see the future is powerful but, there is no reason that he should be able to see everything. His ability shouldn't be omniscient or omnipotent."

"And that method... is absolutely, absolutely, effective?"

"..... it's not absolute. Even I, don't have a complete understanding of his power."

Orsted couldn't give a guarantee.

He didn't say it would be safe or it would be alright.

Rudeus, with eyes similar to someone wanting to be saved looked at Orsted on the verge of tears, what was he thinking about?

Rudeus made his decision.

"... I, put my life in your hands. Please help me."

On that day.

Rudeus Greyrat became the Dragon God's subordinate.



Chapter 10 - Eris Greyrat - First Part

Part 1

After waking up in the morning, I run and train with Norn.

When I return home, I give Sylphy, who is busy taking care of Lucy, a tight hug.

I drop by the living room to greet Aisha and Lilia good morning.

I help the still sleepy Roxy braid her hair.

I call Zenith, in the midst of a staring contest with Beet, in to eat.^[29]

All of the family eats breakfast together.

As if nothing actually happened, life returns to normal.

But the truth is, something did happen.

I did indeed have a duel to the death with Orsted.

I got my ass whupped... yet I'm alive.

The proof of that is -- I look at my hands.

If I curl them up into a fist, I can feel my fingertips in both hands.

After that.

After I prostrated myself before Orsted and swore loyalty to him...

As promised, Orsted cast healing magic on me.

Both of my hands grew back, and I finally regained all my limbs.

After casting another magic on me, he handed me a bracelet he was wearing.

Then, he said, [After your magic has replenished, contact me again] and left.

I'm wearing that bracelet right now on my left hand.

I don't know what effect this bracelet has.

Maybe it helps to replenish magic power?

Or perhaps it helps to prevent Hitogami from spying on me?

It's been 10 days since then, but Hitogami has yet to reappear in my dreams.

Orsted said that under the protection of the Dragon God, Hitogami's interference could be prevented, so maybe the latter.

Then again, it could be meaningless, just a symbol of being a subordinate of the Dragon God or something like that.

Regardless, I lost to Orsted and joined his camp.

I betrayed Hitogami and joined the other side.

I won't take off this bracelet.

I don't regret betraying Hitogami.

Honestly, I feel great.

Rather than [What have I done?], I feel more like [I did it!]

There's no going back.

In the future, no matter how annoying Orsted is, I can't betray him.

We're on the same boat.

Even if this was within Hitogami's expectations, what's done is done.

Still, in my personal opinion, Orsted seems to be more trustworthy than Hitogami.

Somehow, he somewhat reminds me of Ruijerd.

He doesn't have Ruijerd's high pride, neither does he seem to care for children like Ruijerd.

Still, compared to the Hitogami that just stares down from above doing nothing, he feels more like someone who puts his all into what he does.

In any case, a load was taken off of my shoulders.

The pressure in my chest has been relieved.

Maybe it really hasn't been relieved, but it feels like having climbed a mountain and seeing beyond.

Afterwards.

I talked with Sylphy and Roxy, who were at the place.

Sylphy cried, and Roxy reprimanded me.

They regretted not knowing how dangerous an opponent I was facing and felt anxious that I became Orsted's subordinate.

I told them it couldn't be helped, that there was no other way, and they consented for the time being.

I returned to Sharia.

After safely returning to my family, I reported to those that helped how I lost to Orsted and joined his camp.

By the way, Perugia looked the most relieved out of everyone.

Well, I guess nobody really wants to make an enemy out of someone like Orsted.

Everyone I met on the way seemed startled.

When I asked what happened, it looks like my hair has turned white.

I don't really get it, but maybe it's a similar phenomenon to what happened to Sylphy.

If my hair keeps growing with its original brown color, maybe it's a transient thing.

Even if it's permanent, since Sylphy and I match now, I don't really mind...

It's been ten days since I returned to my original lifestyle.

Though I'm vigilant of Hitogami's next move, for now, he's done nothing.

My body condition has gotten better.

I think that my dried up magic has been replenished.

Speaking of which, it seems that Orsted knows some secret about my body's magic power.

Laplace Factor or something like that...

Well, if there's a need, I'll ask Orsted to tell me.

For now, I'll wait.

By the way, speaking of good things,

There was one change to my comfortable everyday life.

Part 2

"Another bowl!"

"Eris-sama, we're out of soup already."

"Eh, it wasn't enough!"

There's a new addition to the dining table, a tall woman with red hair. That tall woman is Eris.

As a matter of course she came home; as a matter of course she took the guest room; and as a matter of course she began to live here. ^[30]

By the way, Ghyslaine booked a room at a nearby inn instead. Maybe she was shocked at how Eris was acting, or maybe she's trying to be considerate for us.

In any case, Eris stayed.

She would go out sometimes, but basically, she's always home. She'll watch Sylphy make the meals, or watch Roxy prepare for classes, or watch Aisha and Lilia take care of the house, or spy on Lucy and Sylphy when they're together.

In any case, when she's not doing anything, she would just watch. Especially when Sylphy or Roxy are busy with one thing or another, she would look with a troubled expression and ∩.

Eris has changed since when we last met. What I mean is, she's prettier now. She's tall for a girl, her body is well-proportioned, and appropriately dressed with a leather jacket like Ghyslaine's, and a light black undershirt and trousers that are easy to move in.

Anyone can see, at a glance, the muscles chiseled on her well toned body. They're not at all budging, but layered tightly. It's hard to look away.

Particular to note are her chest, thigh, and waist. Explosive, tight, explosive. The childish face from five years ago has disappeared, and what's left is a cool beauty.

No longer a girl, Eris has now transformed into a mature female.

For some reason or another, I could never find a chance to talk to her. While rushing back and forth to report about my battle, I lost all opportunity. Even with an excuse, for whatever reason, just seeing her from behind makes my heart race.

On more than one occasion, I tried to make conversation with her, but my timings were always off... As soon as I try to come up with a topic for conversation, her piercing stare would make my chest pound. By the time I recovered, she would have already looked away. For awhile after, I couldn't stay calm, and only with time would my heartbeat return to normal.

Is this... fear? Nah, a joke, it's a joke.

This must be, yes, a crush. Looks like I fell for Eris. Once again I have fallen for her. Maybe I'm that simple, but at death's door, to suddenly see her valiantly arrive to my rescue, push back Orsted, and even bet her own life to protect me, with her outline still carved vividly in my memory, it would be odd if I didn't fall for her.

Right now, I'm but a maiden in love, Maiden Rudi, who has transformed into an angelic high school sophomore.

Yet.

I heard this from Sylphy after coming home. In the past few years, Eris has been single-mindedly training at the Holy Land of the Swords for the sole purpose of fighting Orsted by my side. The cause was the fight with Orsted at Red Dragon Lower Jaw. Seeing me practicing [Magic Disturb] afterwards, she mistakenly assumed that I intended to challenge Orsted. Although I never felt a tremendous difference in strength between us back then, Eris thought otherwise and decided to leave and train.

From Eris's perspective then, it was I that betrayed her. Almost like she left overseas to train, only to return to find her lover with another woman. Unfaithful, cheater.

How our opinions differ on this point, we have already talked about it, so she should understand.

Still, her heart must be in turmoil. With a temperament like Eris, even coming at me with a knife isn't exactly out of question.

If I just tell her, [I have fallen for you again, please be my wife], it doesn't feel exactly right.

Besides, I really am scared of what Eris would do. I don't get what she's thinking at all. Like, what's she keeping to herself? The Eris I used to know would just inconsiderately say whatever she wants.

[Rudeus! I love you! Let's get married! Come to my bed tonight! Don't even think about getting any sleep! Rudeus belongs only to me!]

Things like that.

Yet, she said nothing. Not even talking to herself. Just silence.

Unless...

Several days ago, she put her life on the line to save me from Orsted. Up till then, she had placed me upon a pedestal. For five years, she trusted that I have been just like her, working constantly to become stronger. Yet I didn't. Even though I was working hard in my own way, but not like her. I got my ass whupped by Orsted. Eris must have saw how pitiful I looked back then. Not only that, but I already have two wives. The Eris, who had already reached Sword-King at the Holy Land of the Sword, must have felt disillusioned by what I became.

She said nothing. So maybe, she's just getting ready to leave in a couple days and is just trying to figure out how to break up with me.

With those thoughts in mind, I'm even more scared of talking to her, scared of getting dumped. To hear from the cool Eris, [You're nothing now!] I'll feel hurt.

If that happens, it would only be right, but I would be dejected. Well, if that's the case, please just go ahead and say it already... Ugh, sigh.

Anyways, we should really talk this out. Have a good heart-to-heart, and then consider the future. Having said that, the timing is off, and I'm getting nowhere.

I say nothing, and Eris also says nothing. Each day just drags on and on. If possible, I want to settle this before Orsted contacts me again. But I don't know what to do. Do I just keep dragging on and live with Eris like this?

With those thoughts in mind, Roxy suddenly asked.

"So, when's the wedding reception with Eris?"

She said.

"Wedding reception?"

"Yeah, I had one too, so shouldn't she get one too? I need to ask for a day off that day, so if you can tell me when..."

I fell silent listening to Roxy. Roxy furrows her brows watching me.

"Don't tell me, you haven't said anything yet."

I can feel my embarrassment. Everyone in the family has already talked about it, and they're all set to welcome her in.

Aisha of course, even Norn has begun to treat Eris as part of the family. Not just that, Norn and Eris always chat with excitement over stuff about Ruijerd. Unexpectedly, those two got along really well.

Nobody had any objection, only I have yet to pull the trigger.

"Rudi, you can't keep running away. Eris has been waiting for you."

Roxy points with a finger, putting up the air of an older sister.

"Waiting?"

"That's right. She has been waiting for Rudi to say, [Leap into my open arms!] the whole time!"

Roxy spreads her arms as she said, how cute!

"Eris would never say something like that... Rather, isn't that what Roxy wants?"

"Hey! I'm being serious here. Quit joking around!"

Roxy puts up a serious face while keeping her arms spread.

... What a joke, is that really the case? Eris has been waiting to hear those words from me. Is she really someone like that?

No, Roxy would never lie. This is a true revelation, a sign from God!

If even Roxy is giving me a push, then I really can't hesitate anymore.

Courage, come to me, I must go. I'll properly say it, we'll talk, and if she rejects me, I can find comfort in Roxy's and Sylphy's bosoms.

Okay.

But before that. Abruptly, I spread my arms to test.

"Roxy, leap into my open arms!"

"I said quit joking around already..."

Roxy stops herself and looks into my eyes, then looks around, checking to make sure no one's around.

Then, she wraps her raised arms around my shoulders. A simple leap, right into my embrace.

Her slightly prominent tummy pressed up against me.

"You should be more careful leaping around like that with a child inside you, princess!"

"If I don't give him some exercise, he'll be born weak, so it's fine."

Roxy murmuring by my ears is quite stimulating.

Is that how it works?

...Is that how it works?

Of course, that's how it works.

I feel like staying intimate for a little longer. So I sat Roxy on my thighs and myself on a chair. Meanwhile, I suddenly spy...

"...Eh?"

Someone in a maid outfit is spying at us from the shadows outside the door with her eyes sparkling and a penetrating stare.

-- It's Eris.

"Yah!"

"W-what's wrong, Rudi?"

Seeing me tightly embracing with Roxy, Eris looks away unhappily and disappears into the hallway darkness.

Terrifying. Nothing was said, but it was still so terrifying.

Eh, tomorrow, we'll talk tomorrow.

Part 3

Next day, I look around for Eris so we can talk.

Soon, I found her at the yard practicing sword swings, but for some reason, she was together with Norn (not going to school today?)

To Norn, Eris says, [No, not like that, like this] teaching her how to swing a sword.

"I said like this! Why don't you understand?"

"Even if you say so, I don't know what's wrong with it."

"How should I say..."

Eris is the instinctive type, so teaching Norn must be hard for her. These genius instinctive-types won't know how they do things. In spite of my assumptions...

"Your left hand lacks power, so you only swing with your right. Your blade's edge is tilted."

Eh? Am I imagining this?

"Be more conscious of your left hand try with the intention of swinging it only with your left hand in mind. If you do that, it will make your swing more beautiful."

Could it be that it was Eris who said that?

Not Ghyslaine who dubbed over a lip-sync'd Eris?

"So that's why. Makes sense."

"As long as it makes sense."

After that conversation, those two restart practice merrily. Feels like Norn's swings got a little better.

Well, no matter what, Eris is also a Sword-King. Ghyslaine once said that one cannot become Sword-King on instincts alone. Eris must be the same. In the process of becoming Sword-King, she learned the logic of it.

Still, Eris's swings are fast. From the shaft of the sword onward, I can't even see a blur. Beautiful too, her wavering figure is mesmerizing. Looking alone makes one's breath hoarse - watching sweat drop from that imposing profile, that firm body with those muscles flexing...

Ah! Found something incredible! Every time Eris makes a swing, her chest would bounce with vigor, yet not violent, but with a subtle shake nevertheless.

Probably because her style has no margins, her upper half is almost entirely unmoving, leaving only light vibrations. Speaking of which, the sleeveless shirt she's wearing looks almost like a gym wear. Don't tell me she's not wearing any chest armor? Every swing imposes itself in my eyes. Those are some iron grips...!

"...?"

Suddenly Eris's chest... I mean her swings, stopped. I look back up to her face wondering what's wrong, but she's already looking back at me.

Her mouth is in a \smile shape, her feet are shoulder-width apart, and her chin is slightly raised. Ah, if she crosses her arms, it would be just how I remember it.

While those thoughts crossed my mind, I suddenly noticed that in her hand. The sword she once battled Orsted with, it looks really sharp.

So I backed up and walked away. Talking over difficult stuff with her holding something so dangerous... Seriously?

... Two hours later.

With the training period over, I tried to find Eris once again. She has left the yard. Where did she go? Maybe she changed and left the house? Maybe I should wait for her. No, no reason that we have to be home to talk. If she leaves, then I need to go after her. With that in mind, I head to the restroom and swing the door open wide.

"Ah"

"...!"

It's Eris, a perfectly proportioned beauty, standing in shock before my eyes. Her wavy, red hair drapes over her shoulders, wet, like a river flowing towards her chest.

Her shirt is soaked in sweat, and through it, I can see a ravine, and from that deep ravine, two mountains peaks. The deeper the ravine, the greater the heights, and there rests two majestic mountains.

Sweat contours her shirt tightly around those mountains, and at their peaks arise prominent protrusions. In other words, those are what dreams are made of.

"W-wwwhat are you doing..."

Eris looks completely lost for words. Red-faced and adorably cute. Unconsciously, I held out a hand and touched those meaty mounts. In particular, I pressed against that slightly harder portion. Ah, but it's soft. --In the next moment, a flash came from Eris's shoulder, and I lost consciousness.

Part 4

Coming to my senses, the back of my head was wrapped by something firm yet soft.

Harder than my usual pillows, but warmer and full of bounce along with a gentle rustle over my head.

Ah, a lap pillow.

I see, I'm still in bed.

"Mmm, I can't eat anymore."

Pretending that I'm still asleep, I turn around and bury myself in the Bermuda Triangle between those thighs.

I take a deep breath of that crevasse, and at the same time, rub that behind.

"Yah?"

Eh?

The shape of these buttocks... not Sylphy's.

Sylphy's are small and slender, with so little fat that you can't grip them in your hand.

That smell isn't Roxy's either.

A whiff of Roxy would calm me, yet this smells a bit of sweat.

Alarms ring danger from the back of my head as soon as the smell reached.

It's not bad at all, actually rather nostalgic.

Slowly, I turned around and open my eyes toward the owner of these lap pillows.

Two mountains tower above, and above that, a pair of sharp eyes glare.
Eris.

Eris grabs my cranium.

It's going to break--

Sylphy, Roxy.

Please forgive me, for this is goodbye.

Yet, suddenly, my head was rubbed by a strong but gentle hand.

I curl up into a ball looking at Eris.

She's pouting, her face red, but she isn't angry.

"Excuse me, Eris.... sama?"

"Just Eris."

"Eris... Em, I'm sorry."

For that apology, my head was grasped forcefully.

Ahh, please forgive me, for this is goodbye.

"...To be honest... I was also in the wrong."

"Oh, well... yeah."

"The letter, I read it. Rudeus must have had it hard too."

With my brain firmly locked in place, I nod lightly at Eris.

I'm not mature enough to say that Eris did nothing wrong.

Back then, we misunderstood each other.

I was hurt, and now Eris is hurting.

"Hey, Rudeus."

"What is it?"

" ... "

Her mouth shut. Eris looks uncertain about what she should say.
Things that must be said, but are so difficult to put into words.
For me, for Eris, these five years have been too long.

"Rudeus, those two, do you love them?"

"Yes, I love them."

With those words, Eris's grip grows stronger.

"Even more than me?"

"...Yes."

Hearing that from me, sorrow overwhelms her features.
It's over; I should have picked my words more carefully.
They can't be compared.
I like Eris. I have fallen for her all over again.

"Do you... hate me?"

"Of course not, it's just... we've been separated for too long. So maybe, I don't know how I can face you."

"Even now, I still like Rudeus. I want Rudeus to love me."

Eris, red faced, was that a...?

No, of course that was a confession.

How should I respond?

The answer has already been decided. But before that, I should make sure.

"But, I already... have two wives."

" ... "

With a face of fury, Eris stands up suddenly.
From the lap pillow, I fell over onto the floor.

Looks like I'm in the living room, but there's not a person in sight.
Even though Norn and Aisha should both be home, they're nowhere to be seen.
Those clever girls must want to give us two some personal space.

Towering over me, Eris crosses her arms, staring me down. Her feet are shoulder-wide, and her chin is raised in the exact posture when we first met.

"Rudeus, outside, duel!"
"Eh! Duel?"

Nervously, as I stand back up and dust myself, I asked.

"That's right! Duel; you win, I leave! So, if I win..."

Eris points at me and declares:

"If I win, you have to love me too!"

Feeling something wonderful, I could only nod.

Chapter 11 - Eris Greyrat - Second Part

Part 1

Right now, I stand facing Eris, outside of Magic City Sharia by the city wall. Although lacking an audience, Ghyslaine stands nearby. On the way here Eris asked her to be the judge. With a judge present, she probably doesn't plan to kill me. Hopefully.

" ... "

Eris stood in silence with her sword raised toward me. No, her hand is shaking, a warrior's shivers?

I don't know what to do, are we really going to fight?

To be honest, I don't really mind losing. Losing is great, I like Eris, although like I just said not as much as Roxy and Sylphy, but that has nothing to do with it.

Sylphy has Sylphy's strengths, Roxy has Roxy's, Eris has Eris's. I like them all.

Fickle and indecisive, but I'm that sort of man. Unfaithful, overly lustful, but that's why I covet such a feminine Eris.

If she wants me to love her, I shall love with my all. This is no longer unfaithful or an affair, this is love. It's only natural! To desire such a charming woman is the law of nature! Not like any Church of Milis people would show up suddenly.

But if I lose on purpose, won't she feel insulted? She hates those kind of people, right?

Eris trained, in order to protect me, in order to gain strength against Orsted. That's why I must demonstrate the strength fit to be Eris's husband. I really ought to show an equal share of effort too.

... Even though I may not have worked as hard as Eris, but that's fine. As long as I gave my all, without knowing which of us will come on top, win or lose, I'll ask her to marry me once more.

If I win, then I'll tell her [You belong to me. Quit complaining and come home!] Alright, let's do that.

My armored magic core lay broken and discarded in the forest. In close combat, Eris the Sword-King and Orsted fought to a stalemate. Against someone like her, I don't have any confidence of winning at this distance... If I lose, it can't be helped.

"Rudeus."

Ghyslaine called for me after deciding on something.

"What's up?"

Although it's been a while since I saw Ghyslaine, she hasn't changed very much. All in all, a woman with some years behind her. We greet each other at our reunion, and chatted as well, but never about the current situation. We didn't have a lot to say to each other, but there was no animosity either. Ghyslaine has always been that way, according to Elinalise.

"Eris-sama hasn't changed. Treat her with an attitude."

Ghyslaine's mannerism hasn't changed much either. The subtleties of her words make me a bit uncomfortable. Wondering to myself, am I doing the right thing right now?

Looking at Eris, she's waiting for me to get ready in her usual posture. Her arms crossed, feet apart and her chin raised. The same posture, but so different from the Eris from memory. She's taller, her chest got bigger, and exudes from her an aura of a carnivore.

Five years passed, I changed, Eris changed too. Yet Ghyslaine said she hasn't. Five years ago, how would the me from then face Eris? Facing a stubborn Eris, what would I have done?

"Ready, begin!"

The signal from Ghyslaine came, but I did not raise my staff, nor did Eris move her hands.

After a while Eris slowly moves forward, unsheathes the sword from her waist, it dangles powerlessly, heading towards me. That sword with an almost transparent body, a gift of the Sword God, one of the legendary seven swords.

Eris arrives before me, her sharp eyes looking straight at me.

"..."

"..."

Eris arrives before my eyes, raises her sword still.

"What? You're not going to fight?"

"Eris, I... If you losing means you leaving, then I admit defeat."

Eris pouts, her mouth 〵.

"..."

"Also... I didn't have a chance to say it earlier, well. I... also like you."

I thought her hairs would raise, I thought she would get angry. It might be better if I fought for real. At this moment, Eris's sword comes down.

"..."

I instinctively close my eyes, my body stiffens, but what hit my head is the hilt. A light tap, that's it.

Reopening my eyes, Eris's face before mine.

"I... can't cook like Sylphy."

"It's fine."

"I'm not as smart as Roxy."

"It's fine."

"I'm not as cute as those two."

"Eris is a cool beauty."

"... With my body like this, it's far from Rudeus's tastes."

"No, not true at all, your body is enchanting."

Eris sheathes her sword. Gently her hand wraps around my waist, her full blossom pressed tightly against mine.

With strength far greater than mine she hugged me tightly. The little sweat fails to conceal her aroma, that smell is Eris.

My arms around hers. Her muscles have toughened, but not bulky, just right, feels great.

"Then it's fine to consider it my victory, right ?"

"Yeah."

"If Rudeus was serious, in rejecting me... I would have given up, you know?"

Her voice was trembling. Don't tell me, if I seriously fought, her plan was to intentionally lose.

"You don't have to give up."

"Then, can I be part of Rudeus's family?"

"Yes, along with Roxy and Sylphy, if that's okay with Eris..."

Say it. Say everything. With that in mind I take a deep breath. If too quiet, she might not hear me.

"Please marry me."

Eris opens her eyes wide when she heard me.

"F-Fine! I'll marry you!"

As if disgusted she turned her head, thus Eris and I got married.

Part 2

That night during dinner, I announced Eris as my wife. Unlike that time with Roxy, since I did the prep work, no one had any complaints.

Although I didn't think Norn would object, I expected at least some harsh words from her, but none came. She probably had given up on me when it comes to multiple wives already.

Roxy and Sylphy both gave us their blessings.

"Eris, the three of us, let's do our best together."

"Let's set the rules in order."

Eris trembles nervously in front of those two.

"T-then, I'll be in your care..."

Those words are strange too, although it's strange to see Eris so nervous, but she probably understands that's their own way of showing acceptance.

If possible, I hope they can live together in harmony, but I don't have a right to say that, right?

To cement their relationship, the three of them went in the bath together, as a way of smoothing things over as well as explaining how to use the bath. Although I want to join in as well, but I'll hold back for today.

Left behind are me, Lilia, my two sisters, Zenith... and Ghyslaine.

" ... "

After Eris left, Zenith starts beating me on my head. Even with Lilia asking [Madam, please forgive...] does nothing to stop her. Zenith is a follower of Milis. She can forgive two. But with a third one, she couldn't find it in her to forgive her son again.

"Oww, it hurts mama. Please stop, I won't do it again."

With that said, Zenith finally withdrew her fists and returned to her seat. My two sisters watch me with suspicion beside her.

"You know, Brother, you said the same thing with Roxy-sama too. Even if you say so, who knows how long before you bring another girl over. More laundry for me to wash. It's too much."

Aisha's words are harsh. Seems like my value in their eyes have took a hit for welcoming in Eris. But I'm serious! Even with those words, I feel like she's just messing with me.

"Brother."

The other sister speaks. This one isn't someone who would mess around. I need to listen seriously.

"Oh, what is it Norn?"

"Well, as a follower of Milis, I cannot feel happy with brother's actions."

"Yes."

"But, I also understand the love Eris has for brother, so I won't say anything this time. Even if brother doesn't like Eris, but please love her properly anyways. That's all."

"Okay, I'll give it my all."

Norn seems to really like Eris. In the mornings Eris teaches her swordsmanship, but Norn also was proactive in approaching her. I guess in

the past few years Norn has become more sociable. Is that the effect of joining the student council?

"Rudeus-sama."

Lilia spoke up quietly.

"Oh, what is it, Lilia?"

"Now that you married Eris, the house is a bit full. I plan to rent somewhere nearby and move there with Zenith--"

"No."

Lilia's proposal is unacceptable.

"Please let me take care of you two... Well, really it's Lilia that has been taking care of me."

"No, not at all.. But, if Rudeus-sama says so, then I'll comply."

Kick out my two moms just to welcome in another wife? Paul up in heaven would definitely come back to haunt me. It's only natural for a son to care for his elderly parents. It's true that with Eris, we no longer have a guest room, but who cares. We'll figure something out.

"Rudeus."

Finally, Ghyslaine speaks.

"Ghyslaine-san."

"Ghyslaine is fine."

She's in her 40s already, but her muscles haven't weakened a bit, result of a lifetime of training perhaps.

"Eris-sama, can I leave her in your care?"

"... Yes, I swear to God."

"Right."

Ghyslaine smiles gently.

"You grew up. Those eyes are same as Paul's when he married Zenith."

That should make me happy, right? Yes, I'm happy.

Right, the same eyes as Paul. That's great, I have grown up...

Eh? But that's the Paul that Ghyslaine knew.. should I really be happy?

"Ghyslaine, what do you plan to do next? Will you stay around?"

"No, once I leave Eris-sama with you, my work here is done. I plan to head back to the Asura Empire."

"Asura Empire? Going to help rebuild the Fedoa Region?"

Her eyes shone when Ghyslaine heard me.

"No, I will go hunt down those that killed Sauros-sama and kill them."

The mood suddenly grew heavy. What a terrifying answer. For so long she has been taking care of Eris, now that she hands over her, her job is done, so all that's left is revenge.

"... Find them, in other words, you don't know whom? It was probably a political plot, so I don't think it's just one guy."

"Then I'll just kill them one by one, all of Sauros-sama's enemies, until it's over."

That's too naive... How do I stop her? No, no matter what I say she won't stop. No matter what, that's Ghyslaine for you.

No, on the other hand, I should give her a hand and support her instead... Now I remember, in my diary, when Ariel was assassinated, Water God and North Emperor were involved.

"Ghyslaine, according to my sources, Water God and North Emperor are hired by Asura Empire."

"Them..."

"You know them?"

"Yes, Eris-sama actually knows them better. What of it?"

"They might be your enemies. In that case, even Ghyslaine might not survive, right?"

"True, I alone cannot defeat them."

Ghyslaine nods and stares into my eyes, as if asking me to get to the point.

"... In that case, I know of someone that also took the fall in the chaos that took Sauros's life. Although Boreas might be her rival too, so she can well be Ghyslaine's enemy too. But if you work with her, then you can kill those enemies with impunity."

"Who is she?"

"Ariel Anemoi Asura."

Ghyslaine's ears raised. Ah, how nostalgic. In class, whenever there's something she doesn't understand, Ghyslaine would do something similar. Well, better if she doesn't know her.

"Princess of Asura Empire."

"Oh!"

But is it really okay to introduce Ghyslaine and Ariel? Ariel will head to the Asura Empire eventually during the time of political strife. Is it okay to involve Ghyslaine in that?

No, the future can change, with this diary, I can offer her a lot of advice. Besides, the strife was part of Hitogami's plans. Now that I'm a subordinate of Orsted, so who knows what'll happen as a result.

In that case, if Ariel is to win, then gaining Ghyslaine would help. In that case, I'd probably help too... But I probably need to consult Orsted on this matter.

"In any case, why don't you have an audience with her and see?"

"If you say so, okay."

Ghyslaine said without a second thought. For now, at least, I stopped her from her naive actions. Good.

"Aha~"

Aisha and Norn look at me blankly.

"What?"

"Well, I was thinking, brother really was the teacher of Sword King-sama before."

"Wait, you didn't believe me?"

"It's not like I don't believe you. I was just thinking, that Sword King-sama is really obedient."

Ghyslaine and I stare at each other. Did we say something weird?

"You know, brother. At school, there's a Senpai that wants to become an adventurer one day. He said [There are two Sword Kings coming to town. The super scary kind] things like that. Even though usually adventurers in town would never give a second glance at strong people. Yet when it comes to brother... What is it, that Aha~ kind of feeling."

Hearing Norn, Ghyslaine suddenly laughs.

"Rudeus is far stronger than I am. No matter what, even that Dragon God recognizes his abilities."

"Really~"

Norn seems impressed. With that, maybe brother's stocks can rise a little. Even if it rose, only the upper half did. Really feels like my lower half just keeps dropping.

Anyways, thanks to Ghyslaine, I can keep some face.

That's good, really good.

Part 3

That night.

Ghyslaine returns home. Sylphy, Roxy, and Eris talk among themselves. What could the three girls be talking about? Despite my strong interest, it's better to leave the girl talks to girls. I'll have to pass.

The mood seems good, and Eris is listening diligently. This should be fine, Eris is a different person now.

I went back to the study and watch Norn study. After she left to sleep, I fill in my diary. A lot of memorable things happened today. Thinking about the future and Orsted though, I couldn't help but feel a little unease.

Anyways, the moment of crisis has passed, I should let loose a little.

By the time I left the study, the house has quieted down. Looks like the girls' meeting is done. Whose room are they staying at tonight? Or maybe they'll all camp out at the living room instead? Probably not.

With it being so quiet, I can't help but feel a little uncomfortable. That night when I met the future me was a quiet night like this. Maybe something's coming? For example, that guy with a body full of mosaic might suddenly jump out of the hallway shadows.

No, nothing will happen...

Entering the bedroom but no one is around. No light is on either, guess I'm sleeping by myself tonight.

As I was thinking of these things, the bedroom door suddenly swung open from the inside, and a great power pulled me inside.

"Oww!"

Immediately I raise my hand and gather magic towards my opponent, but my wrists are held back. My entire body is pressed against the door.

It's over!

Thinking that, I suddenly noticed who my opponent really is.

"... Oh, it's Eris."

Ah, Eris. I guess that's her in her nightgown holding down my wrists.

"S-say, Rudeus..."

Her eyes bloodshot, her face red, and her breaths heavy, she looks angry. Did something bad happen? I have to be careful with my words.

"We, us, are husband and wife, right?"

"... Oh, yeah. Ah, would it be better if we have a wedding ceremony? Get everyone together and make it lively?"

"I don't care about that. I don't even remember how to dance anymore... More importantly, as husband and wife, so it's okay right?"

What's okay? Before I could think I feel an arm bar against my shoulders, and I was kissed. BAM our teeth slammed into each other, and the pain spreads throughout my body.

I want to retreat, but the door blocks my path, Eris forces herself all over my face.

"Puhah..."

Eris puts her arm around my waist and starts dragging me over. By the time I regain consciousness, I'm already in bed. What is this, what's going on? Eh? Are we doing it? Eh?

"Em, Eris, em, these sort of things, shouldn't we, well, have a schedule, maybe discuss with Sylphy and Roxy first."

"It's done. They will let me have today."

"Roxy didn't say anything? Like hold back while she's pregnant or something?"

"She said don't worry about it."

Somehow, I'm already in bed, and Eris is really strong. I don't think I can get away.

"Hey, Rudeus, I want a son."

Eris's breaths are rough, not of anger, but animalistic passion.

Violently pursued like this. No, I'm actually really happy, pursued like this is worth feeling happy about.

Two bodies so close together, little Rudeus has already become like that, at least the body is honest.

Wait, isn't this backwards? Aren't our roles reversed.

"Rudeus, I like you, so, it's okay right?"

"Eh, yeah, it's fine, but please, calm down a bit. We should get in the mood first, maybe a little wine, let's talk about the past five years, and after the mood is right, we can embrace and confess our loves."

"I don't care about those things. I've been waiting to do this!"

Eris presses me down as she said. Her thighs clamp my legs firmly in place, both my hands squeezed, unable to move. With her nose she presses against my chest and begins to breathe in deeply, like a dog, do I smell?

"Hahh... Hhha.. Rudeus. Now that we're married, you belong to me, right?"

"Eh? Well, I'm not just yours. I'd be thankful if you all get along and not fight."

"But tonight it's my turn, so you're mine?"

No matter what I say, Eris wants to make me hers.

"... Well, yeah I am."

Her hands squeeze even harder. It hurts, it hurts. My wrists are broken, so broken that #1 needs to come over to heal it.

"T-then, I get to do whatever I want, right...?"

What does she want to do? What'll happen to me? It's definitely XXX. Am I unwilling? The answer is NO, then the answer is YES.

"I, I guess?"

In that instant, Eris became a beast.

Part 4

Next day.

Chirping sparrows woke me. I immediately looked for Eris. I immediately found her. Right before my eyes, Eris resting peacefully right before me.

"Ho..."

I let out a sigh of relief and reflect on last night.

I ended up really enjoying myself last night. Technique-wise I held the advantage, and I dominated the first half. [Like I'd lose to Eris] I was thinking, so I tried my best. But by the second half, the tables were turned.

It's a difference in stamina. It was like this the first time too. Eris has seemingly infinite stamina. What can I say? I can't beat her...

Once exhaustion took me, she violated me to her heart's content. [I'm sorry dear, this person has made me her play thing]... that sort of feeling.

I can't become a bride anymore.

Yet when she's asleep like this, Eris looks strangely adorable. Even though she was so wild last night, right now she has become so serene. It brings a smile to my face. I wonder if this is how Sylphy feels when she sees my sleeping face.

"... Still."

Right now Eris is giving me an arm pillow. I'm not usually on the receiving end, but it's strangely refreshing. Her arm is slender, yet strong, and I feel really safe for some reason.

Anyways it's been 5 years, Eris has grown up. How muscular has she become? Last night I recall some alluring contours, but it was too dark to know.

I squirm a bit to touch Eris's tummy.

"Wow, amazing..."

Not particularly bulging on the surface. Or rather, there's some fat, but tightly coiled around that layer of fat are heavily compressed layers of muscles. With just a touch, it's obvious which is which.

Even though I also have a six pack, but Eris's seems far more incredible, I want them. So much muscle but not bulky, and such a thin waist to boot...

Only god-like techniques could train such an amazing balance of external oblique, abdominal oblique, and the Psoas major muscles.^[31]

Even so, a woman's muscles, why are they so enticing, I can't stop touching them.

Not just the muscles, my hand reach upwards, towards those mounts clearly marked even under the blanket. Last night I was groped but never groped... It's fine if we're husband and wife, right?

"Amazing..."

Incredible! Those foundations! Pectoralis muscles! How firm, how muscular, simply wonderful.

And there, riding on top of this dish is a just desert. The balance between soft and hard is the important part of life, thus H SKETCH ONE TOUCH.

It grew magnificently, like a honey melon. Sylphy and Roxy are both lacking. Theirs aren't bad either, but as expected big has an entirely different appeal.

God, I'm grateful that I can touch this from here on out. Thank you Roxy, Sylphy, I did it! I successfully climbed Mount Eris, a new dawn awaits for all mankind!

"Ho ho ho."

Just now, a white haired, old man come to my mind. It's the hermit! The Oppai Hermit! How have you been! Look, this is the real deal! Hallelujah! ^[32]

"Ho ho ho, I have nothing left to teach you... Do your best."

Ah, hermit! Where are you going, hermit! Please! I need your guidance!

"..."

"Ah."

In my daze, Eris and I suddenly caught each other. Who knows how long she's been staring at me, rubbing her all by myself. Is she going to beat me up? Just then, Eris grabs me by the throat. She's mad.

"Let's talk it out. Rather than fight, how about we talk this out, baby. Just a little pillow talk, about how we used to wrestle. Just now, my curiosity got the better of me and I wanted to rub your abs a bit..."

"..."

Eris did not let go of my hand, rather, she turned around and pushed herself all over me, natural instincts in her eyes.

So she's not really angry, rubbing her chest in the morning just relights her passions. If it was me, waking up to ecchi stuff, I would want it too.

Men and women are different, but Eris is an exception. O-okay, let's do this. Eris can be my appetizer for breakfast!

"B-be gentle, it's morning already. Even last night you were.. Kya~!~"

I made the voice of a maiden, and was ravaged a second time.

Part 5

Getting out of bed in the afternoon, Eris is already gone. Empty bed, a chill by my side, but I feel no loss, only a little shame and satisfaction.

Stood up while massaging my sore waist, I walked by a window. The sun is particularly yellow, and so is my face.

I spot Eris outside the window, a perverted smile on her face, in a happy mood. Still moving around after all that, what a monster.

Sylphy and Roxy both have less stamina than I, to be squeezed dry like that is a first for me.

If Sylphy is passive, and Roxy is technical, then Eris is the aggressive type.

My masochistic qualities seem to have awakened. Tokugawa, Toyotomi, Oda, something like that.

Eris brilliantly earned the title of Sword King, because Orsted kicked my ass. Just kidding, she might kill me if we got carried away. I can't just keep troubling my Hideyoshi here.

Next time, maybe we decide on a safety word first. I should talk with Eris while she's still exhausted from last night...

With those thoughts in mind, I went to cleanse myself in the bath. After cleaning, I enter the basement and offer a prayer to my shrine. Another holy object is necessary, because God of Wisdom, God of Love, and God of War... A wooden sword would do.

Thinking about this and that I entered the living room, Aisha, who's sweeping the floor, jumps up.

"Hey, brother, good morning! A mail came! It doesn't say from whom, but there's an emblem here. Do you recognize it?"

That letter stops me in my tracks.

On it drawn a very obvious emblem.

Dragon God's.

This letter is from Orsted.

Translator's Notes and References

1. Jump up↑ [TL: assuming he meant 沈痛]
2. Jump up↑ Note: young woman
3. Jump up↑ Note: of a DQN
4. Jump up↑ Note: The way this is written is incredibly simple, hence incredibly common. However, with according to precedent of previous references, gunna assume this refers to DQ3.
5. Jump up↑ Note: Considering his net+anime background, this line should come with the nuance of 'being a really great idea' and 'breaking new ground'.
6. Jump up↑ Note: Surprisingly took me a whole hour to find an example of this kind of pose.
Here: <http://i58.tinypic.com/330zoer.png>
7. Jump up↑ Note: '逆恨み'(gyaku'urami). It's a term that I don't think we have a word for in English. It's not a 'thing' in English. Pops up a lot in this series though. ((lisho.org has it as *sakaurami* meaning "unjustified resentment through misunderstanding".))
8. Jump up↑ Note: Time Slip = body moves to the past.
Time Leap = consciousness moves into past version of body.
9. Jump up↑ Sazae-san reference.
10. Jump up↑ localized, originally a phrase the Buddha is reputed to have said when he was born: 天上天下唯我独尊
11. Jump up↑ Might be misread: ルディが抱かせろって迫ったら、拒否しないんだけど、それは拒否しないってだけで歓迎してるわけじゃなくて.....うーん。
12. Jump up↑ Unsure about the last question: 言ってくれないと、ヤダよ？
13. Jump up↑ Water God Reida refers to Sword God Gull Farion as Gull-boy.
14. Jump up↑ アレスタル
15. Jump up↑ ヴィンド方式
16. Jump up↑ Human God (人神ジンシン) and Hitogami (ヒトガミ) sound similar in Japanese.
17. Jump up↑ Aura battler Dunbine (1983)
18. Jump up↑ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tant%C5%8D>

19. Jump up↑ Unsure, "あるいは妊婦という単語が出るのだろうか。
。"
 20. Jump up↑ g-force is a measurement of acceleration felt as weight.
 21. Jump up↑ A katana (刀) is a single-edged sword akin to those used by the Japanese historically. Most European fantasy settings emphasize heavier two-edged swords (剣, ken).
 22. Jump up↑ Even though you've lived longer with him, it's me that has the ability to stand beside him. That kind of feeling.....more like, they were the ones that saved him when she was not around only because she was not around. if she had been with rudeus, she would have been the one to save him
 23. Jump up↑ 鳳雅龍剣
 24. Jump up↑ That technique has been shown in previous chapter, by Rudeus and others. Release after they attack first to chop the hand/arm holding the sword.
 25. Jump up↑ 手刀; Knifehand strike
 26. Jump up↑ In real life, one hand reverse grip Iagiri is very rare, as shown by the number of videos filming it on Net. Kendo fanatics say it's weak in power, and they mostly change to proper grip if they can.
 27. Jump up↑ I do not think this was a permanent color change like Sylphy had?
 28. Jump up↑ Because every living beings are afraid of Orsted, so they can not make a decision of your own will while they are scared shitless. And Rudeus is not, so he can choose without being influenced by the curse.
 29. Jump up↑ Beet is the baby treant from chapter 136.
 30. Jump up↑ This could be changed to "As a matter of course, she came home, took the guest room, and began to live here
 31. Jump up↑ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psoas_major_muscle
 32. Jump up↑ Oppai=breasts
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